HEROES
OF MIGHT AND MAGIC

COMPLETE EDITION

ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK
& BONUS DVD

UBISOFT

HEROES
OF MIGHT AND MAGIC

COMPLETE EDITION

UBISOFT

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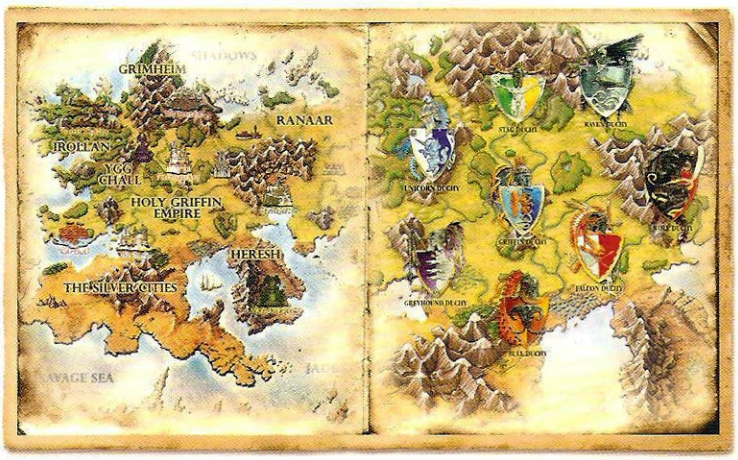

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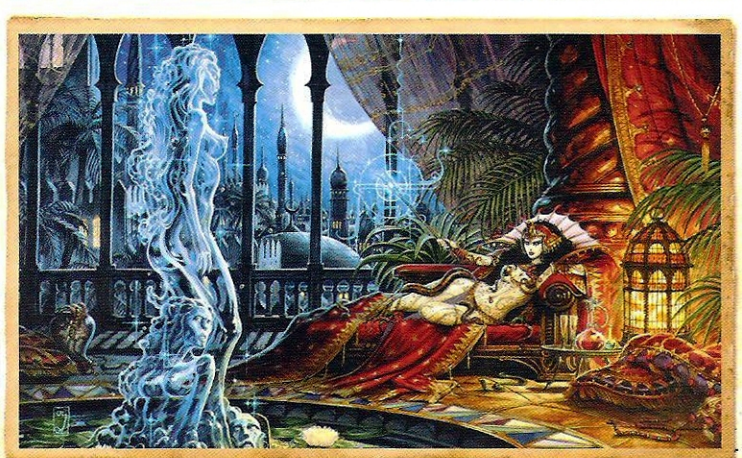

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Visual
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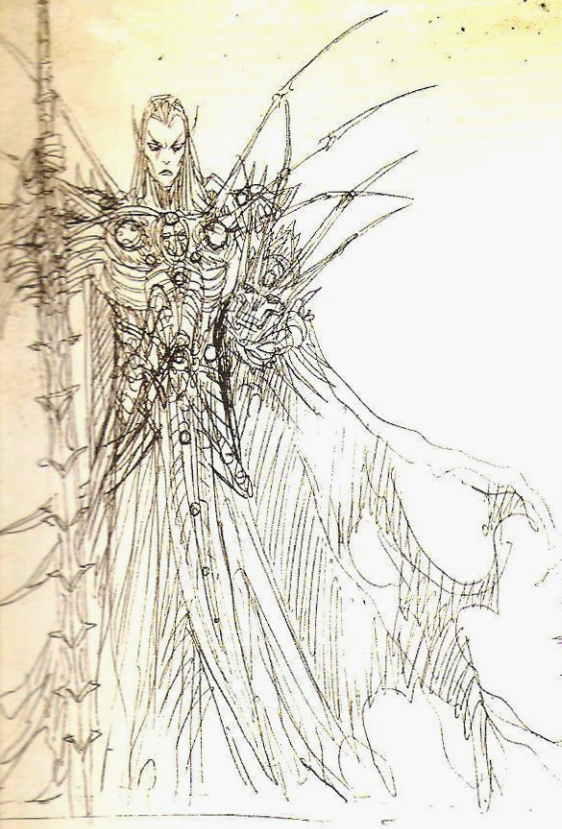
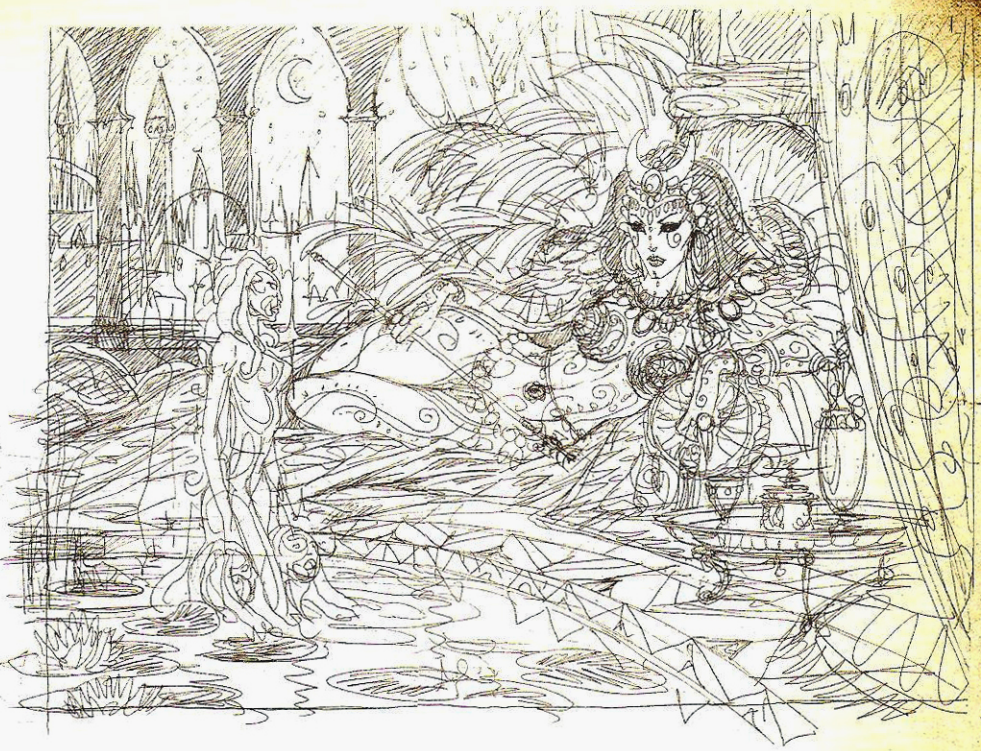
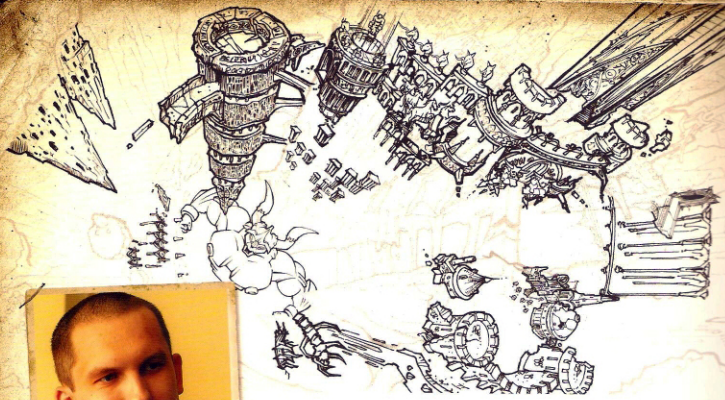


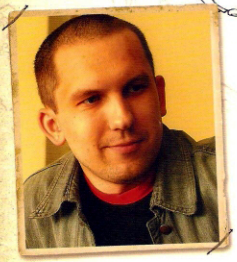


Olivier Ledroit

Born on June 3, 1969 in Meaux, France, Olivier Ledroit is one of the most famous artists / illustrators of graphic novels and comics to emerge from the 1990s. He is best known as the creator of «Les Chroniques de la Lune Noire», a multi-tome bestseller in Europe done in collaboration with François Froideval for the publisher Dargaud. The series launched a new design style for graphic novels in the '90s known as «BD gothic». Olivier Ledroit is recognised today as the originator and leader of this style.

uld you describe the process of creating a new design?
lways start by picturing the different factions, how they are
lated to each other, what differentiates them etc... Then for each
de I come up with some basic shapes and silhouettes that remind
e of places, eras etc... So I give graphical codes to each one of
em. Then I use this basis to create all the characters and places.
n Might&Magic, one constraint was that it look different
m the usual fantasy universes. Factions like the undead
the elves have very strong and established visual codes
d Ubisoft wanted to move away from this limited vision.
is is why the elves in Might&Magic do not only refer
a Celtic imagery but also to American Indians. The Dark elves
the other hand will remind you of the Italian Renaissance.

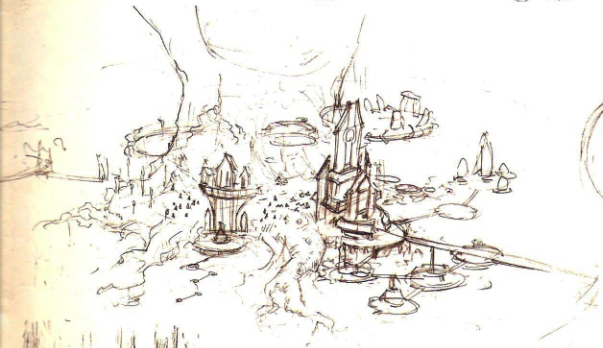




Alexander Panov

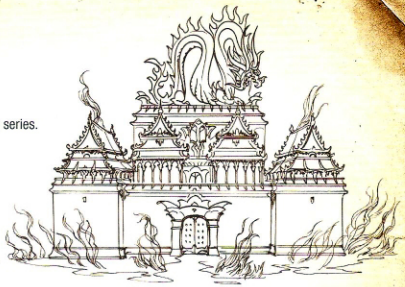
Heroes is my favourite series, and I can't begin to explain how happy I was when we started working on the fifth installment. It was the most gigantic project I've ever worked on. There were a lot of challenges and a lot of innovations. Heroes V opened tons of possibilities to explore and materialise ideas and fantasies. Unfortunately, not everything went as intended... but in spite of that, Heroes V was a huge and unprecedented experience that's almost impossible to describe.

Alexander Panov, art director, Nival

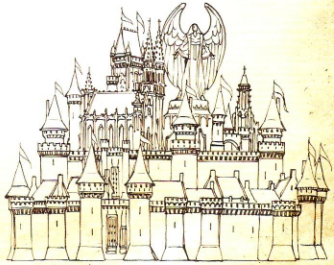


Viktor Surkov

Heroes of Might & Magic was my first video game assignment.
I'm more of an illustrator and comic artist. My personal projects
can be found in the catalog of the French publisher Soleil Celtic:
a 120-page book on the theme of dragons, as well as a dark fantasy series.
Working on the creation of different characters in the game,
as well as on their personalities made me want to explore
the universe and spend some time on the many possibilities
offered by the variety of factions.
Portrait development was also fascinating.
Isabel, the leading heroine was very interesting to develop;
I liked her multi-layered personality that really personified the game.



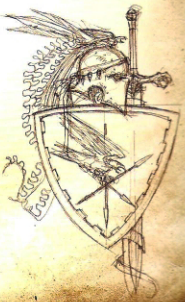
Gwendal Lemercier



Ilyad games

Ilyad Games is a French company of graphic artists and sculptors that creates metal miniatures, specialising in tabletop tactical games. They work in close collaboration with Olivier Ledroit, aiming to bring his art to «life», and created most of the original heroes' portraits for the game.

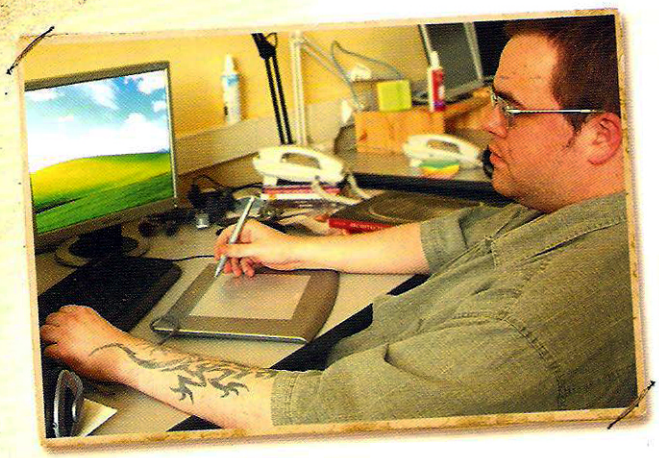
Adrian Smith



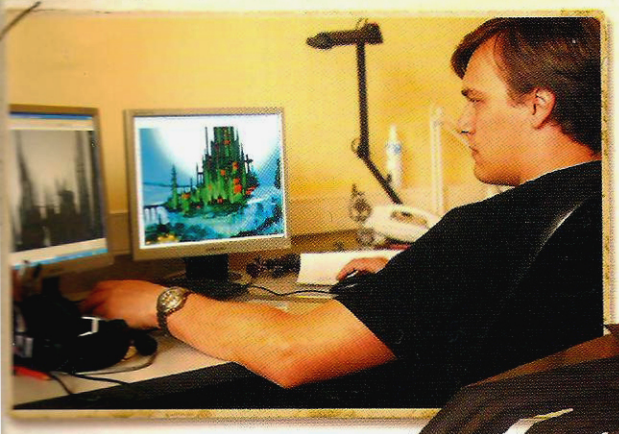
In my freelance career I have worked with many companies on both small and large contracts. Over the past year or so I have been working on computer games for next generation consoles and PC games. Over my career I have become a respected name in the games industry and, because of this, am often asked by companies, large and small, to design concepts and do cover work for them. Along with my contract work, I find the time to do personal projects such as the series of graphic novels titled 'Broz'. This is a popular series (three books so far) in Europe and is written by Pat Mills, a well-established and famous comics writer.

Making of

The first step in any game development uses the simplest technologies: pen and paper. Lots of it - ok, some artists prefer to sketch directly on the computer. This phase describes the game, the game engine, the objectives... and, of course, we begin preparing the game visuals. With a game such as Heroes of Might and Magic, that has hundreds of creatures, buildings, heroes, etc., a lot of work is needed.
The first rough black-and-white sketches, completed quickly, set the mood for a creature. Unfortunately a lot of these end up in the bin, discarded for various reasons. Some creatures are hard to get a good feel for, others are simpler and only the details need to be refined.
A global vision of the game and of the faction in question are needed to maintain overall coherence.

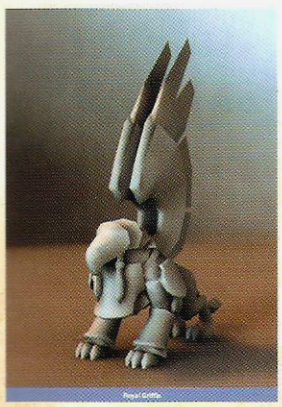


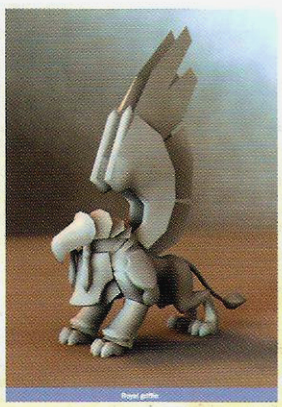
Once the black and white design is approved, it has to be reconstructed from various angles to facilitate the next step. Here, colour research is done to reach the final image of the creature.
In Heroes, a special step is needed after this to create the various upgrades for the creature. This is done by adding armour, changing the weapon, changing the colour scheme, or sometimes even altering the creature in a more fundamental way.



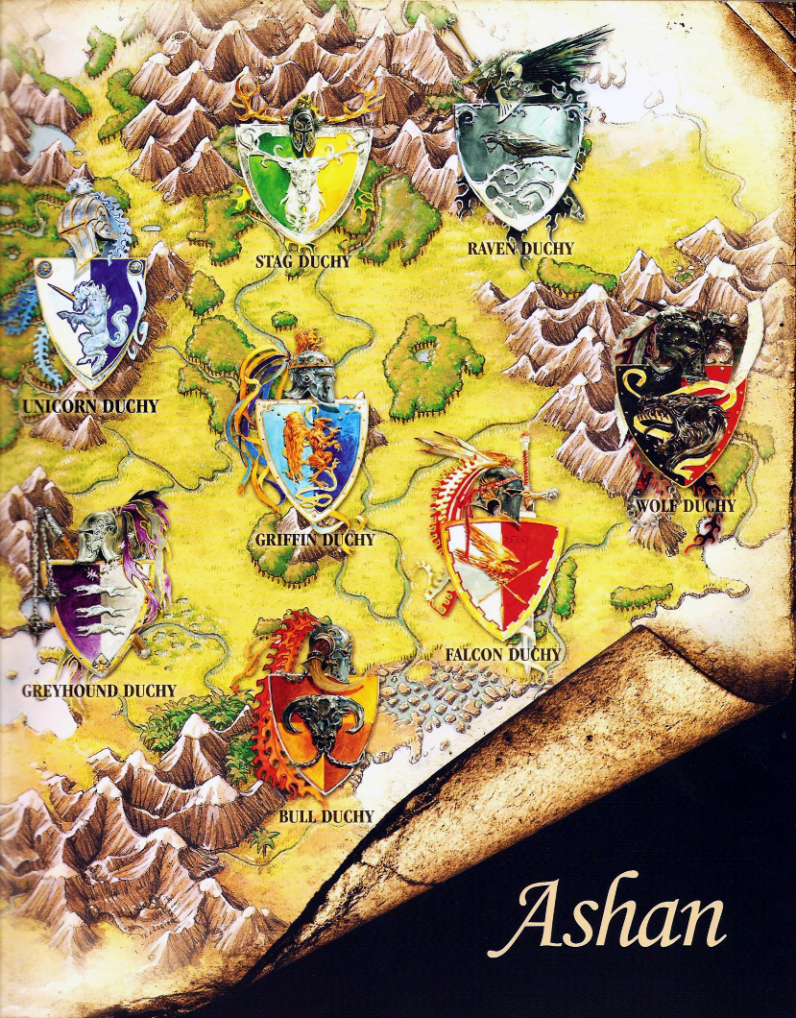
Leaving behind the pen and paper, the final step is to create the model of the creature. First, a wireframe version is done to get the volume right. This is quite simple if the paper sketch is precise enough, and it provides views from the sides and front.

he model is smoothed out and rendered in grey, which helps to verify the quality.
he colour is then added, with a texture applied onto the model. An important step in achieving
gh, final quality concerns the texture itself; the model must have the lowest number of facets
planes possible, and the texture can remove the feeling of blockiness if it's done correctly.





SHADOWS
GRIMHEIM
Tor Myrdal
RANAAR
Syris Thalla
IROLLAN
YGG
CHALL
Talonguard
HOLY GRIFFIN
EMPIRE
Stonehelm
Karthal
Al Safir
HERESH
THE SILVER CITIES
Nar Ankar
SAVAGE SEA
JADE


STAG DUCHY
RAVEN DUCHY
UNICORN DUCHY
WOLF DUCHY
GRIFFIN DUCHY
FALCON DUCHY
GREYHOUND DUCHY
BULL DUCHY
Ashan

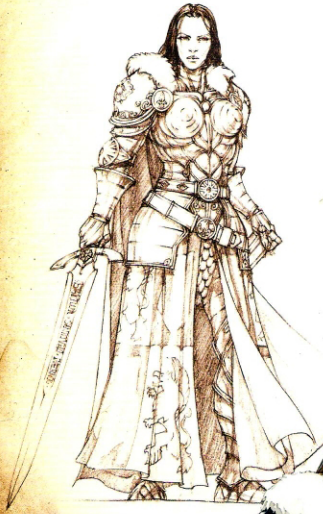
Isabel
Haven

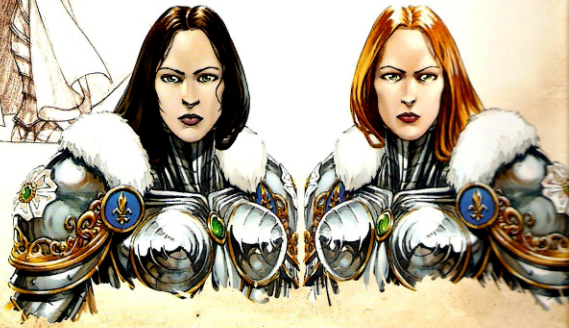
"If I do not receive justice, I will impose it."

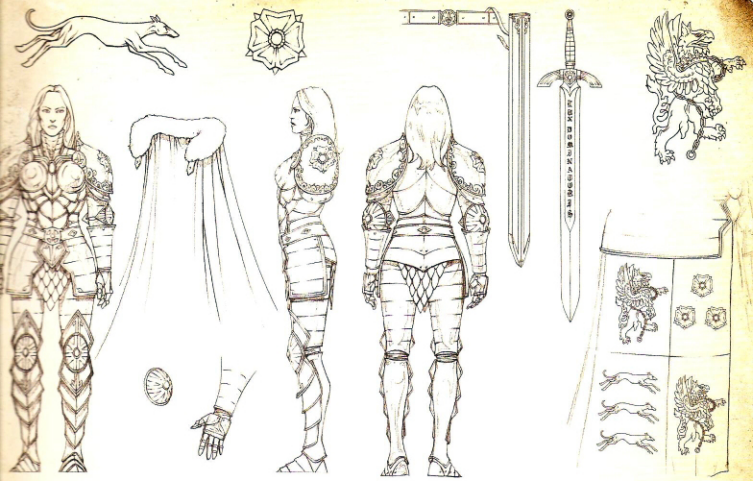
As the sole child of a noble family, she had an upbringing that was not far from being an orphan — she had nannies, tutors, and maids, rather than siblings, parents, and friends. As a result, she swings between moments of almost spoiled or petulant impetuousness and the need to seek approval from authority figures like Godric and Markal.

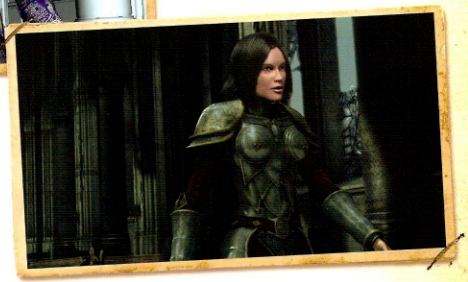
Isabel is a strongly built, blue-blooded woman
who can be a bit sharp and aggressive,
but still has an attractive feminine appearance.
There is no doubting her inner strength,
and no commoner would dare to approach her.
She has a cold but magnetic grace.

Kirill Naumov, lead artist, Nival







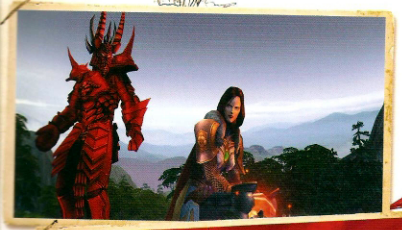


The process of creating the main character for the game went quite quickly; we knew what sort of hero we wanted to get and the first sketches from Olivier and Gwendal were already very close to the final result. What took a lot more time were the final stages: working out the details of the face, the variations in the hair style, the eye colour... We did a lot of tests to be sure the expression shown by the portrait really conveyed what we had decided at the beginning.

Fabrice Cambounet, producer, Ubisoft

Agrael
Inferno

"I always obey commands. Unless I don't want to." Agrael is a Demon cultist, meaning that he is part of a sect within the Dark Elves that worships the power of the Demons and their progenitor, the Dragon Ourobos, Father of Chaos. Though a loyal and obedient servant of the Demon Sovereign, Agrael falls in love with Isabel during the time he is sent by the Demon Sovereign to keep an eye on her.

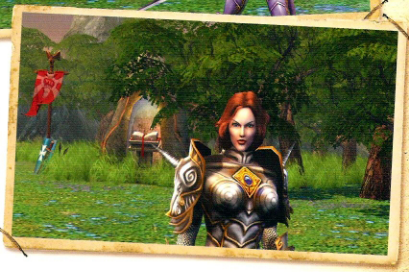


"A man has three hearts. One for the world to see, one for a few close advisors, and the last that is known only to himself."
Raelag is Agrael after he goes through the True Nature ritual with Tieru. He is, therefore, a declination or an aspect of Agrael; not better or worse, but evolved along a different axis. He has been through emotional hellfire and emerged very tough and very focused; very clear on what he wants and what his moral code is.

Raelag
Dungeon

Godric
Haven

"Service is much like charity – both a privilege and a duty. Alexei IV's advisor and the tutor of Nicolai, Godric is defined by his strict sense of order and duty and by his unswerving allegiance to the Griffin Empire. His religious faith is simple and unquestioned, bordering on fanaticism.

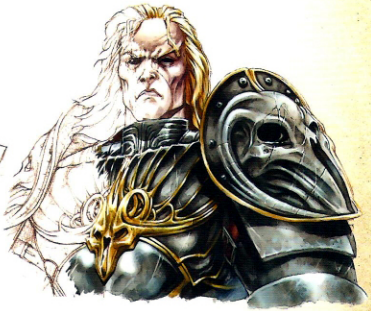


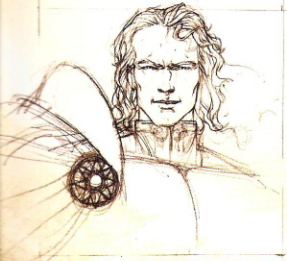
Freyda
Haven

et us keep Griffin eternal by proving the mortality of her enemies."
n aristocrat by birth and a warrior by upbringing (under the stern, but caring hand of her father Godric), Freyda has been prepared nce her birth for a life of duty to the Griffin Empire. Freyda fought in Queen Isabel's War, nobly acquitting herself on the field battle and earning the grudging respect of those who suspected her position was a result of nepotism. Freyda is the female itome of the «good soldier.» She is dedicated and loyal, hardworking and serious.

Nicolai
Haven

"For the kingdom of my fathers."
For Nicolai, the kingdom is greater than any person in it, and his unquestioned duty is to preserve it. He is in a situation where he is destined to be acted upon, rather than being an actor — though a king, he is a pawn of the Demon Sovereign and Markal.





Zehir
Academy

"With great power comes great responsibility."
A young mage-in-training growing up during the game, Zehir is the son of Supreme Mage, Cyrus, but his father never had time for him. Instead, Zehir was raised by severe tutors. Being of an amiable nature, and in need of affection, he befriended the common people: guards, kitchen apprentices, servant girls, stable boys, etc. However his relations with them were rocky, as he was liked for his friendliness, but disliked for his impatience with those less intelligent than him. This dichotomy of feeling marks his relations with other people.

Findan

Sylvan

"There is no higher good than to defend that which is worthy of existence; even more so if it cannot defend itself."
Findan is a good old-fashioned Ranger hero who worked his way up through the relatively meritorious ranks of the Elven Rangers. He has been placed in charge of the frontiers, as he is both trusted and powerful, yet not ambitious.

"Wisdom and strategy are eternal; passion and loyalty both fleeting and weak."
Markal was once an influential member of Haven's royal House. He was also the secret leader of Haven's Necromancer Lodge.
He is quite old and experienced and used to serve Alexei before his son, Nicolai. He was protégé of Alexei's wife, but was never liked by Alexei or Nicolai and never favoured by the Peers of the Realm (who despised him, Godric included) or the Priests of the Light (who were suspicious of him – rightly so). Nicolai decided to exile him when his mother died.

Markal
Necropolis

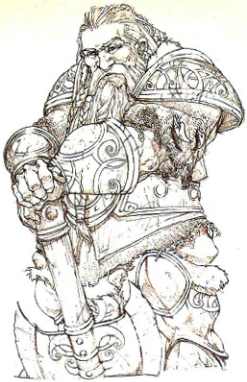
Alaric
Red Haven

"You shall burn for your heresy."
An excessively fanatical priest of Elrath with delusions of grandeur, Alaric was easily seduced by Biara-as-Isabel and her promises of power and glory. Forsaking Elrath's worship - even if not entirely realising that he did so – Alaric has been drawn further and further into Biara's web of persecution, murder and paranoia.

Kha Beleth
Inferno

"I wear chains, even when I'm not in prison. Nothing is more fun than getting even."
The Demon Sovereign is still incarcerated in the depths of Sheogh, and has been feeling angry and frustrated for 800 years... He acts out his desires through his loyal servants like Agrael, Biara, and Veyer. The prolonged imprisonment has not made him less aggressive, less destructive, or more lenient.

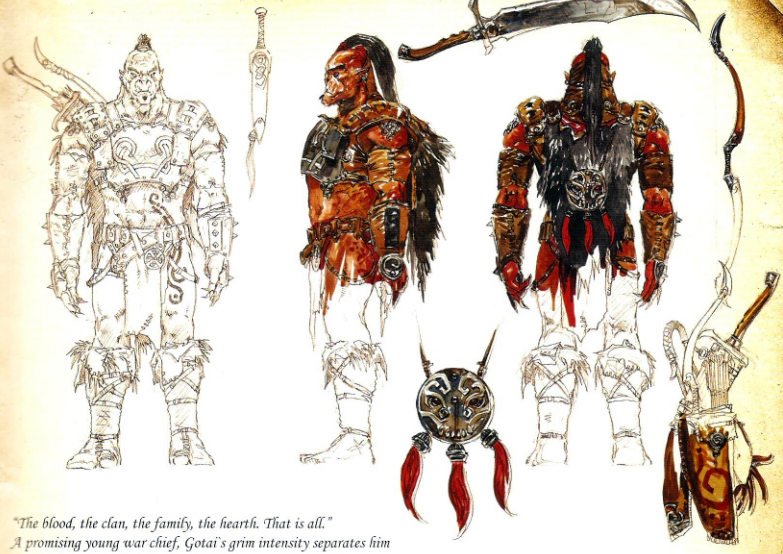
Wulfstan
Fortress



"Give me a flagon of beer, a wolf's head on a pike, and some unexplored hills -- and I'm a happy man." Wulfstan is a member of the Winterwind Clan of dwarves; he is strong and inured to the extreme conditions of the Dwarven mountains (not many Dwarves venture outside their subterranean cities).

His travels in the exterior have also made him friendly with other peoples, a fact that for some more conservative elements is equivalent to being tainted. .

Gotai Stronghold



"The blood, the clan, the family, the hearth. That is all."
A promising young war chief, Gotai's grim intensity separates him from other Orcs. While he shared their sense of clan loyalty, he was extremely – almost irrationally – loyal to Quroq, the warchief who adopted him when his own parents were killed by Yetis. With Quroq's passing, however, Gotai must find his own place in the world. Given his skills, that place is likely to be a lofty one.

Shadya
Dungeon

Hangvul
Fortress

Tieru
Sylvan

Veyer
Inferno

Jhora
Academy

Orson
Necropolis

Duncan
Haven

Thralsai
Dungeon

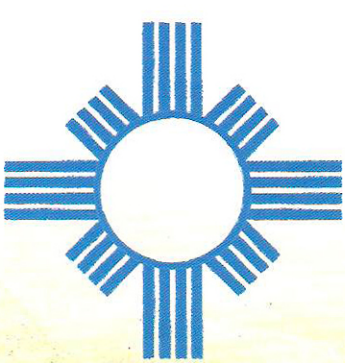
Ladies of the Dungeon

Yrbeth

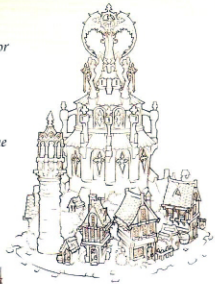
Dungeon

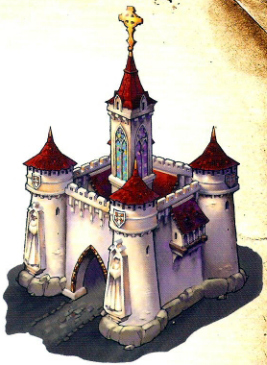
Some of the secondary heroes received a lot of attention, like Yrbeth. Nival started off with many different versions of her, based on those Ifyad developed the final artwork and the colour version.

Haven



he Griffin Empire is a feudal country with a owing population. In theory, the Griffin Emperor as absolute rule, but in reality, the countryside is opped up into six Duchies, dozens of baronies, least nine so-called 'independent states', and so rth, so that much of the Emperor's time is spent ggling his various nobles. Frequently, at least one f these regions is in some sort of revolt, though ese are rarely serious or bloody.





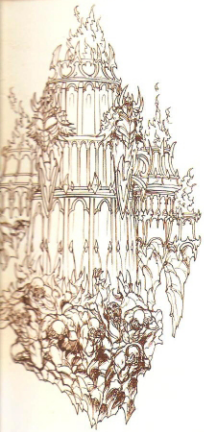
Knights come from the ranks of nobles and socially ambitious merchants. The rise of the middle class has taken place mostly in the cities, and many of the newly rich traders are seeking to ally their families with noble houses, generally through marriage. Most peasants don't care who's in charge. They just want to go about their lives, which makes things easier for everyone.

The Church of the Light wields considerable political force. "Rural" priests of the Dragon of Light are generally well-meaning and stodgy, but the senior priests are politically savvy and ruthless. Priests are allowed to marry, though not actively encouraged to do so, and most towns have a small, square stone church near their centre.

Inferno

Demons have an absolute monarchy. Since the disappearance of the six Demon Lords, Kha-Beleth has ruled supreme and alone. The empty suits of armour of the missing Six stand in the hall of his great palace, warning every visitor of the power they are about to face. What Kha-Beleth says, goes. The slightest disagreement or disobedience is met with swift and severe punishment. Kha-Beleth enjoys meting out his own punishment, and it is said that he has slain more Demons than any mortal ever did. However, when Kha-Beleth doesn't feel like doing his own dirty work, he has an entire hierarchy of nobles, attendants and servants who are more than happy to attend to his every whim.

Each Demon styles himself a Duke, a Baron, or some other such title and claims some section of their particular hell as their own. These self-proclaimed nobles are organised into a rough hierarchy ,based on power, with the stronger bullying the weaker into obedience. The strongest hold cities or positions in Kha-Beleth's court, which they guard jealously. Even the very lowest Demon will call himself a Knight or Chevalier, and dragons help the slave who fails to address a lowly Demon taskmaster properly.

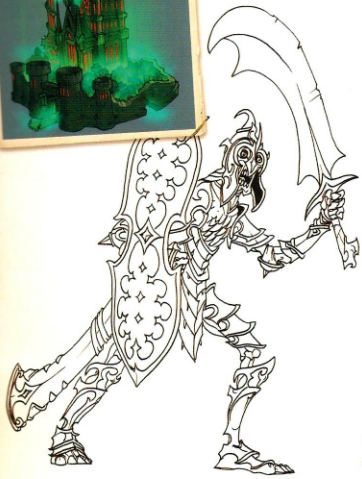


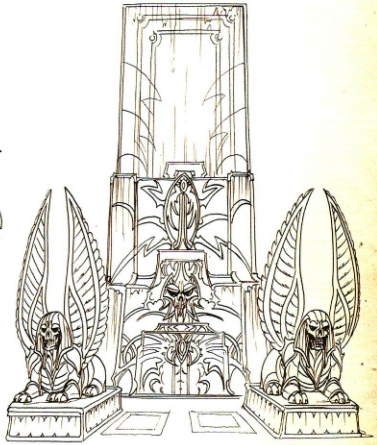
Demons are very touchy about their titles, and will seize any slight, real or imagined, as an excuse to attack a rival.

The favour of Kha-Beleth is the single most sought-after commodity in the entire Infernal Realm, and there's always plenty of intrigue as various Demons jostle for his attention. When no war against the living world is imminent, the Demons instead war on each other, both for the sake of individual demons' ambitions and to amuse Kha-Beleth. Those who incur Kha-Beleth's favour are granted noble titles, slaves, land and more.

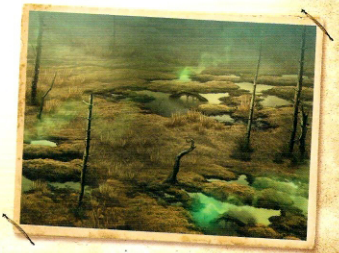
Necropolis

Necromancer life is ascetic in the extreme. Alcohol is hard to find, as is any sort of gaiety, or celebration. Citizens speak in whispers and low tones, nobody hurries anywhere, and there is little change on the streets from day to night. Those who have tasks do them, quietly, and then go home to their families. Families are small, and Necromancers spend their birthdays in seclusion and penitence. Procreation is generally frowned upon as a distraction from the greater work.





Politics in Heresh are strictly about observance. The more powerful you are in Asha's service, the more authority you can command. Reverence to Asha and asceticism in her service are the marks of a proper Necromancer, though there are, of course, some who use piety as a mask for ambition. Obedience to those greater than one's self is absolute, unless of course there's a chance to eliminate them and take their place. Murder for advancement is not a crime in Heresh; murder for passion's sake is. And in a land where the dead are conjured on a regular basis, a murderer needs to be cunning indeed if he has killed for the wrong reason.



Dungeon

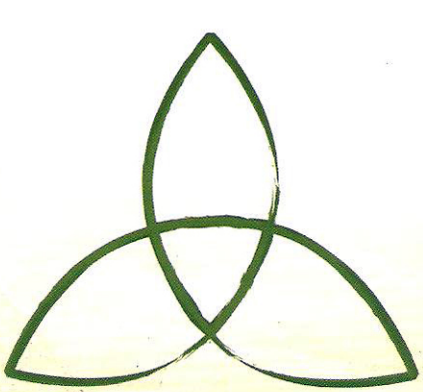
Dark Elf social structure is built around expertise – which clan houses the most efficient killers, the best spies, the cleverest merchants, and the most devoted servants of the Dragon of Darkness. The clans, themselves, are fiercely independent, and each line keeps careful track of its achievements, notable members and victories. It also tracks defeats and insults, both at the hands of outsiders and at those of fellow Dark Elves. Vengeance is something of a second religion among the Dark Elves, and they cultivate their grudges over the centuries.

The monarchy is a rare thing among the Dark Elves, as the clans guard their independence jealously. Only in the hour of greatest crisis will a single ruler emerge and command obedience.

The rest of the time, the clans are perfectly happy to get along without a queen or king. They will manoeuvre endlessly against each other, but they always keep in mind the greater goals of the Dark Elf race. Sabotaging a dwarf stronghold, for example, always takes precedence over humiliating a rival.

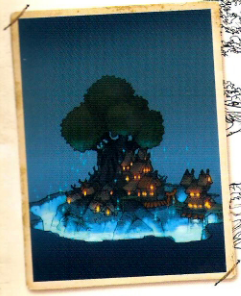
Marriages among the Dark Elves are things of convenience, lasting anywhere from hours to decades. It's rare for a couple to last, and usually it's the female elf who initiates the divorce. Children follow their mother and her clan; men are expected to go find themselves another wife and father more. Unlike their sylvan cousins, Dark Elves believe firmly in population growth.

Sylvan



There is a king of the elves, and there are many other kings below him. The high king rules from the central court, and once he is chosen, his word is law. The process of choosing a king falls to the druids, who fast and endure the sweat lodge until all are given a vision of who the new ruler should be. The decision has to be unanimous, and the druids will stay in the sweat lodge without eating for as long as it takes.

The High King rules for life, which for elves, is a very long time indeed. Around him circulates a court of soothsayers, druids, warriors, musicians, ladies in waiting, poets, jesters, sons of lesser kings and the like, a whirlwind of chaos that somehow manages to be fiercely efficient.



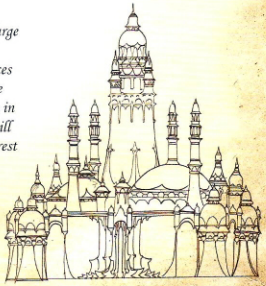
Intrigues within the elvish court are less deadly than they are elegant - elves do not like to kill other elves. Rather, they will work to humiliate, exile and otherwise bring low their rivals. Enmities can last hundreds of years, for elves do not forget slights, and they guard their honour fiercely.

Academy

A senate of wizards, called The Circle of Nine, rules the Silver Cities, though each of the cities maintains a greater or lesser degree of independence. A combination of the most powerful and most ambitious wizards in the country, in theory they have absolute authority over everything from tariffs to military resources, to the coinage. In reality, there is so much infighting and politicking, and the various cities guard their small liberties so fiercely, that it is only in times of crisis that the Circle of Nine gets to exert any real authority. Each city and region has their own Circle, all subservient to the Circle of Nine.

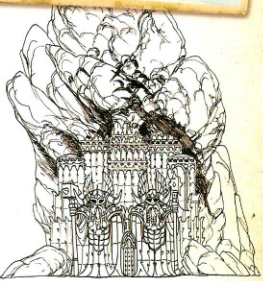
Citizens who are incapable of magic are essentially second class, with an ability to harness sorcerous power being the key to social and political advancement. There's no prouder moment for a peasant family than the discovery that one of their offspring is capable of magic.

Magic is taught in academies in the large cities, as hedge wizardry is frowned upon. These academies are formal places (much like Oxford or Cambridge in the real world) where which school you're in means a great deal about what you will learn, how you learn it, and how the rest of your life plays out. Wizards tend to cluster into "schools" following the teachings of one great magus or another, and rivalries between schools are fierce.



Fortress

Each dwarven city has its own king, with a council of advisors from the wealthiest and most industrious families. The King Under the Mountains is the king of kings amongst the dwarves, and it is he who sets policy and summons them to war. Kingship is not hereditary, though it is a lifetime post. After each king's death, the council convenes and elects his successor. At such times, the tunnels are filled with both celebration and intrigue, as various candidates court voters and attempt to discredit – or eliminate – rivals.



Dwarven culture is very much male-driven – though women are neither bearded nor as rare as one might think. However, the dwarven lines place great stock in heredity and lineage, and they guard their women fiercely. She-dwarves are taught to fight and forge, but they are rarely allowed to journey outside of the tunnels.

Only in the most dire emergencies will dwarven women join the fray. Social structure is based around three relationships: family, fostering and fighting. There is a complicated web of apprenticeships that serves to train young dwarves and cement relations between clans. These ties are precious – a single unworthy apprentice can poison an alliance that has existed for centuries.

Stronghold

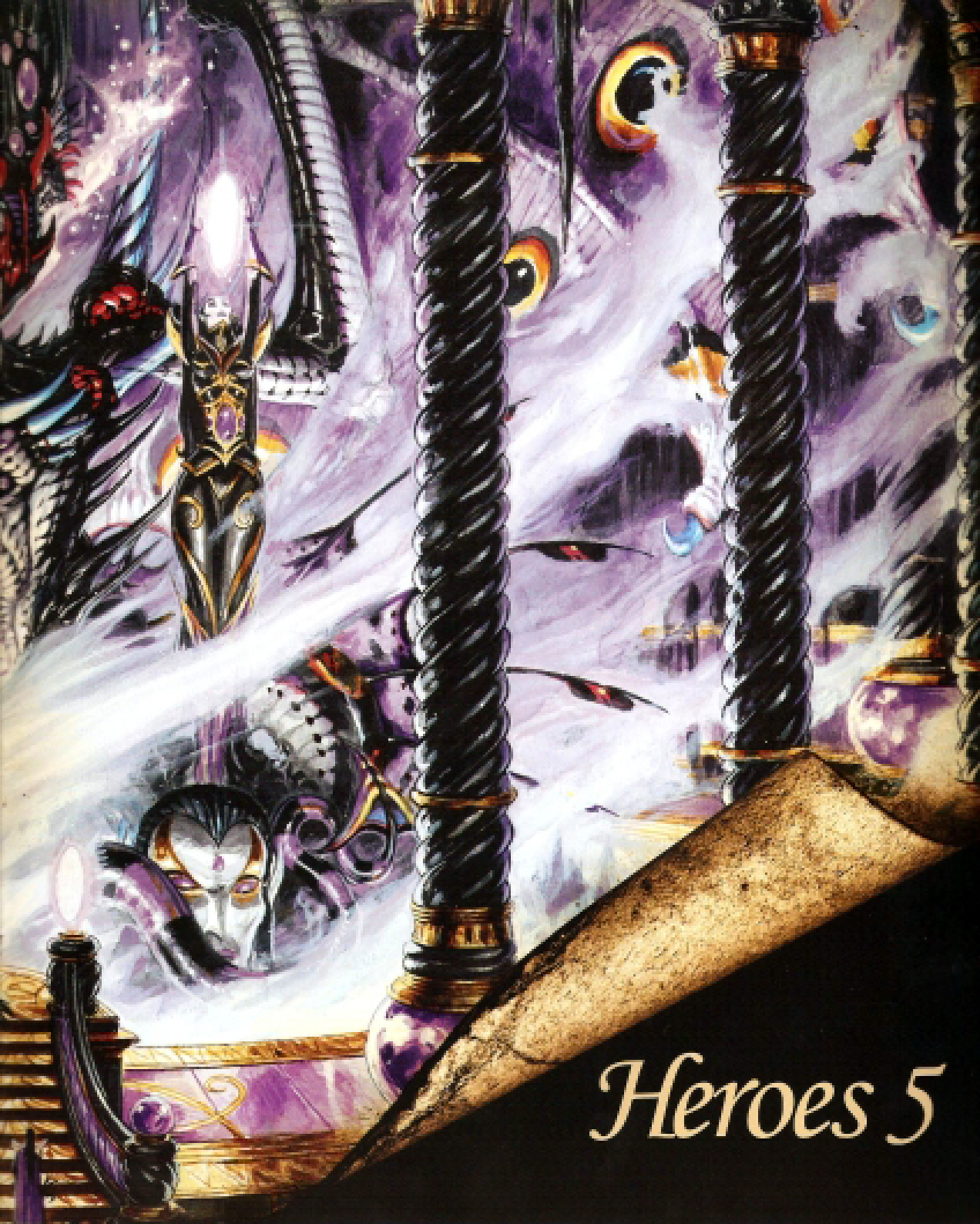
Orcs have a tribal organisation. Each family group has its own herd, and moves to follow and protect that herd. Each clan also has a warlord and a shaman, who handle the physical and spiritual needs of the tribe. Marriages between tribes are common; so are short, sharp conflicts growing out of raids or disputes over prey. If there is any threat to the orcish nation as a whole, however, such things are quickly forgotten and any invaders face a unified front.

The only things more important to Orcs than their herds are their Aurochs. It is said that steppe orcs are born in the saddle, marry there, and die there, and it's not far from the truth. Orc mounts are plucked from the vast herds of wild aurochs that roam the steppes, and are carefully bred to be the most ferocious warmounts in the world of Ashan. Orcs can ride without saddle or bridle, and can fight mounted as readily as most people walk.

An orc is expected to contribute to the tribe as soon as he can. If he can walk, he can do chores. If he can do chores, he can ride, and if he can ride, he can hunt. All orcs, male and female, are taught to ride and fight before separating into their different "disciplines."

There are those male orcs who prefer to stay by the hearth and female orcs who hunt and raid. These orcs dress and are treated as if they were of the "appropriate" gender for their role, and otherwise nothing is said about it.

Schooling, caring for children, and other tasks are tribal based, the better to maximise resources and keep the children safe. With fuel at a premium and fire always a danger, one cook fire is always better than a dozen.


Heroes 5

Adventure

These are the very first sketches that were produced during the development of Heroes of Might and Magic 5.

They can rightfully be considered as the "first bricks", and were used to quickly get a feeling for what the look and content of the adventure map views would be.

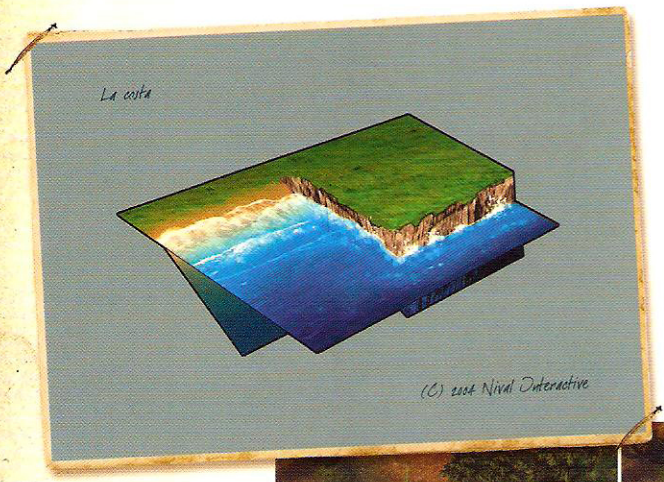
Many ideas were considered in the early stages, around the fall of 2003. Adding weather effects or a day and night cycle added a lot of atmosphere and eye appeal to these sketches, and the design team played around with these ideas for some time.

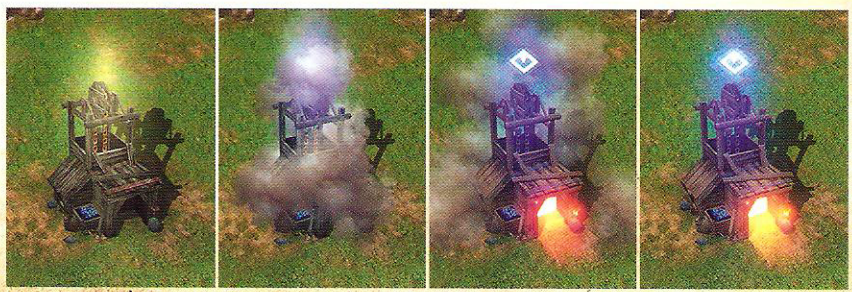
Many objectives had been agreed to early on in the project, and each one had to be researched, tested, and validated quickly enough to make it into the game engine development cycle. One objective was to put elevations on the adventure map, in order to increase the feeling of immersion and to have a more varied and interesting map. That would also allow for some great in-game screenshots later on.

We also wanted the act of capturing a building to be really visual and clear. In addition, it had to revive or reanimate the building (mines, mostly), so that the player's conquest of the map felt like reinjecting life blood into it.

Another idea we worked on was the heroes' "trails": they had to leave a trail behind them that grew more impressive for a higher level hero. Each race has its unique animated trail, which had to be distinct from other races, as well as non-intrusive on the adventure map paths.

A lot of effort went into interface research, which is common for any video game project. Many different versions were produced with different styles, different logic, and different ergonomics.





After the first pen and paper tests, the adventure map was prototyped and, less than a year later, we were able to show off a first version. However, at this stage it wasn't very impressive; heights were barely visible and the colour scheme was not vibrant enough. The interface, while much less intrusive than the first tests, wasn't visible enough.

So a major overhaul took place to redesign most of the elements at this stage, including camera, level design and interface.

This was a long process that required reworking a large part of the project, and the team had a lot of things to keep in check. Everyone has been happy with the final result, however, and it was worth doing it.

Superpuper City
Build
Imp Crucible
Buildings List
Fiery bolts emerging from the hellish magma fields bathe the granite crucible where imps are born in great numbers.
Creature dwelling (Produces imps)
Cost: 2000 GP, 10 Ore

The town screen in Heroes 5 development has been a paradox. Players only spend a small fraction of their playing time in this view, but we spent a large part of the workload developing it.

In the first tests, the screens were static and overloaded with information. A hardcore fan's delight, but a deadly fright to any casual player.

It was greatly simplified and, for a time, remained a static view of the town, as in previous games. The result was already very good at this point. However, the team decided to dramatically improve this part of the game in order to increase its visual appeal.

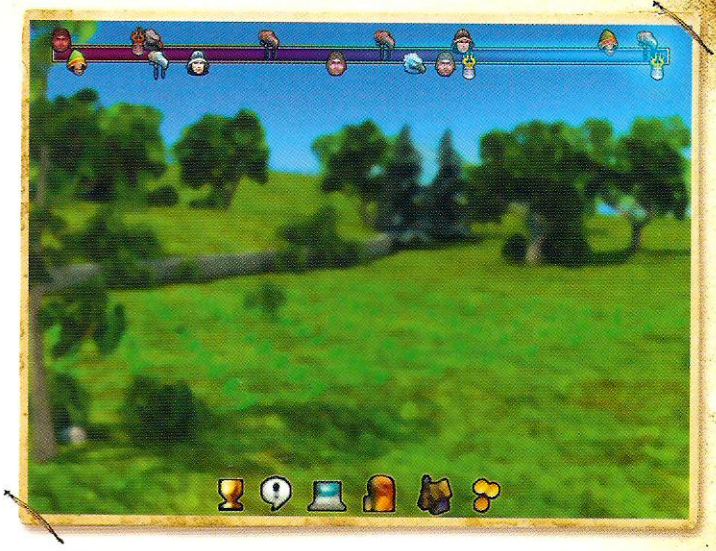
The towns moved to a complete 3D view, where you can rotate around and see many more details. It had a large impact on the project's image and marketing, as this was a specific and unique Heroes 5 flavour.

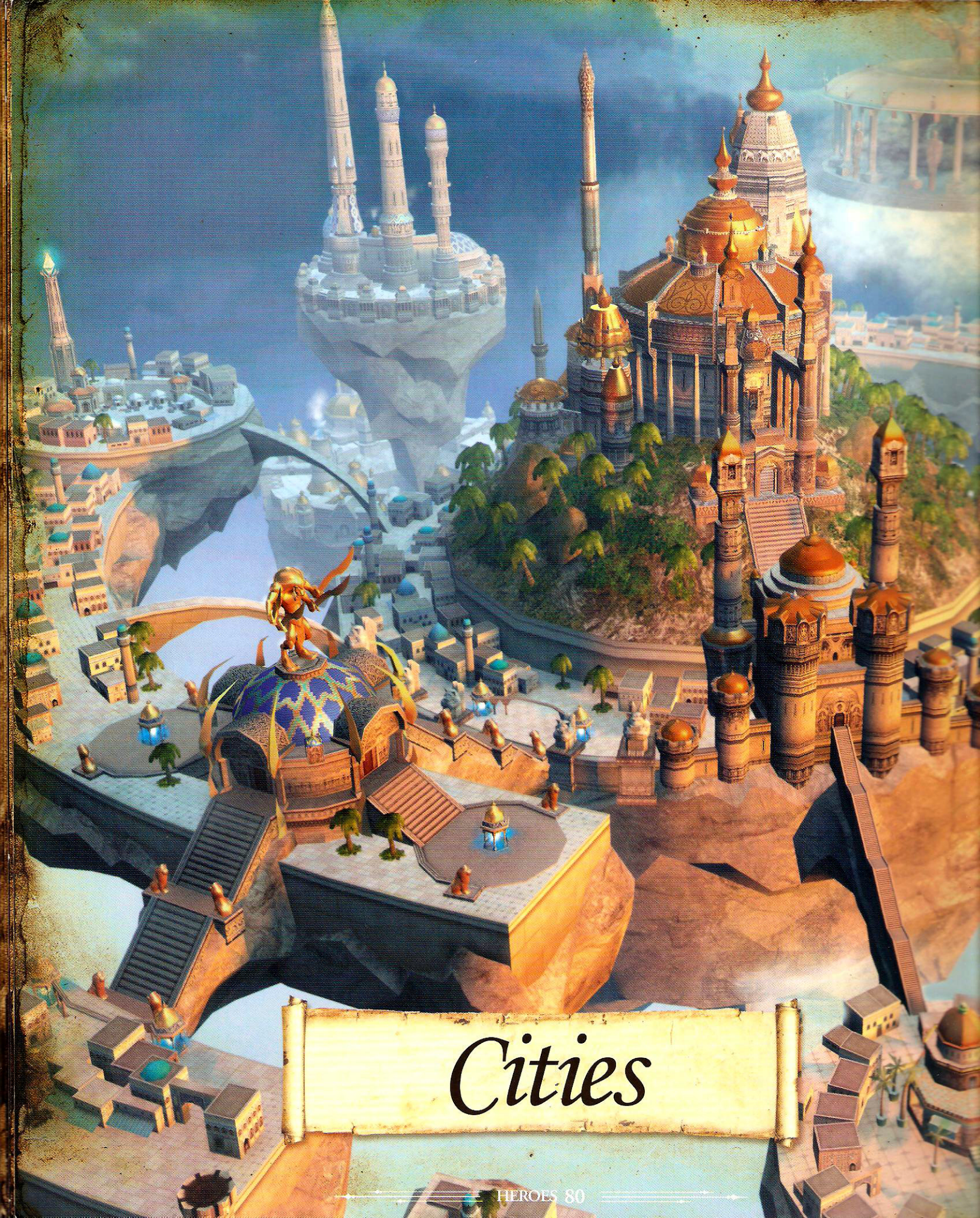
The battle view development is always a major subject in a Heroes game, and it was clear from the start that a lot of effort would go there.

The basic principles for this screen didn't really change from the start to the finish of the project: semi-free camera, 3D background and creatures, zoom on the action, reduced interface...

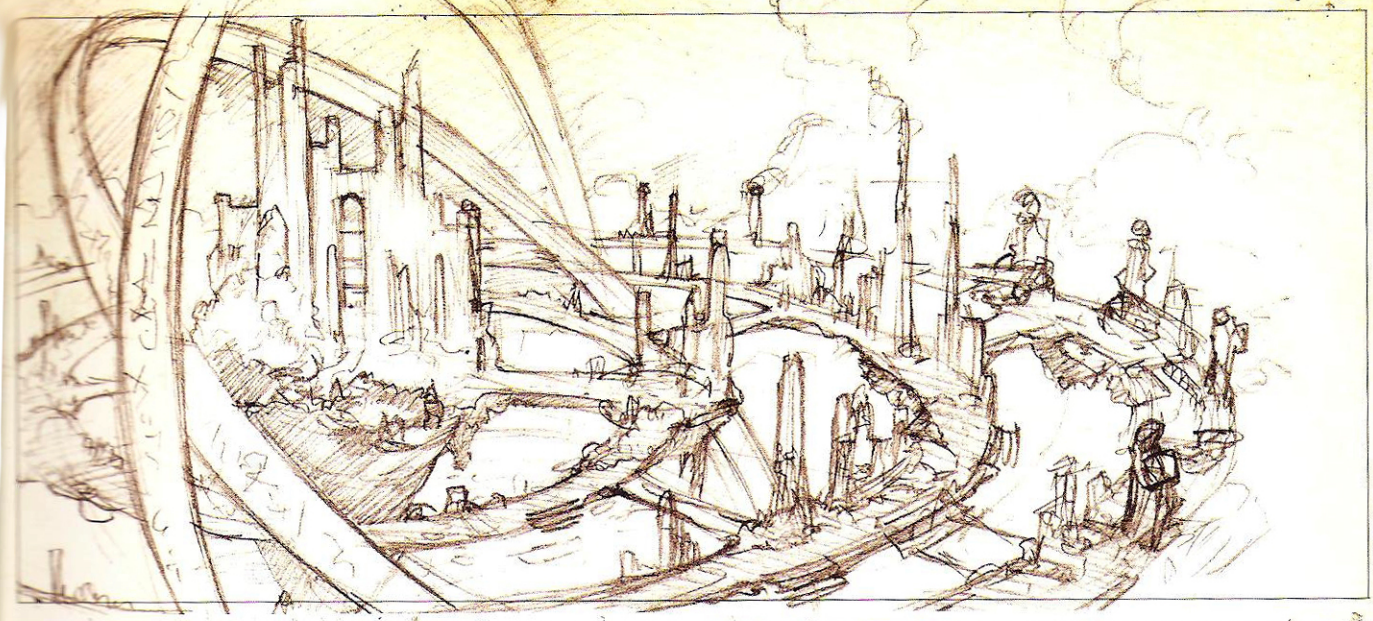
It took some time to finalise the Initiative bar that shows the order in which the creatures can move, because it was important to make things clear enough – the underlying design also evolved a bit in this respect.

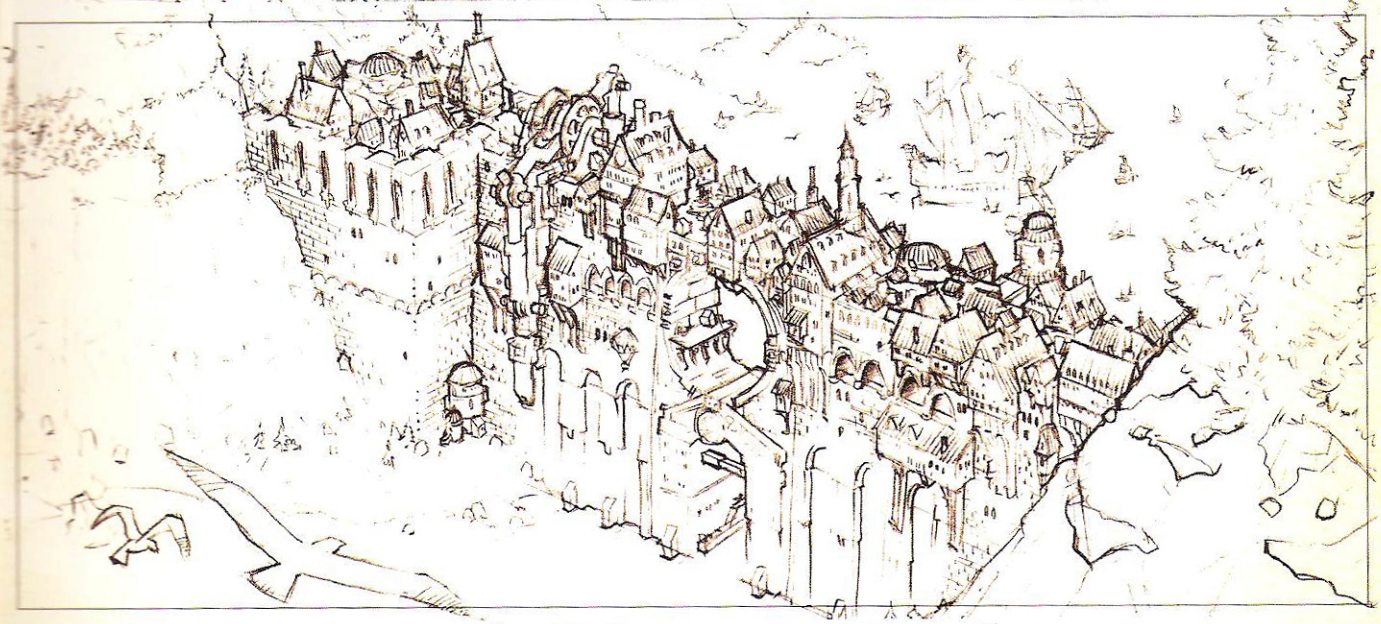
The other steps were mostly about choosing the right angle and distance for the camera and, of course, deciding on the size of the battlefield iself. It had to be small enough to see the creatures and plan your actions, and large enough that it required tactical thinking.

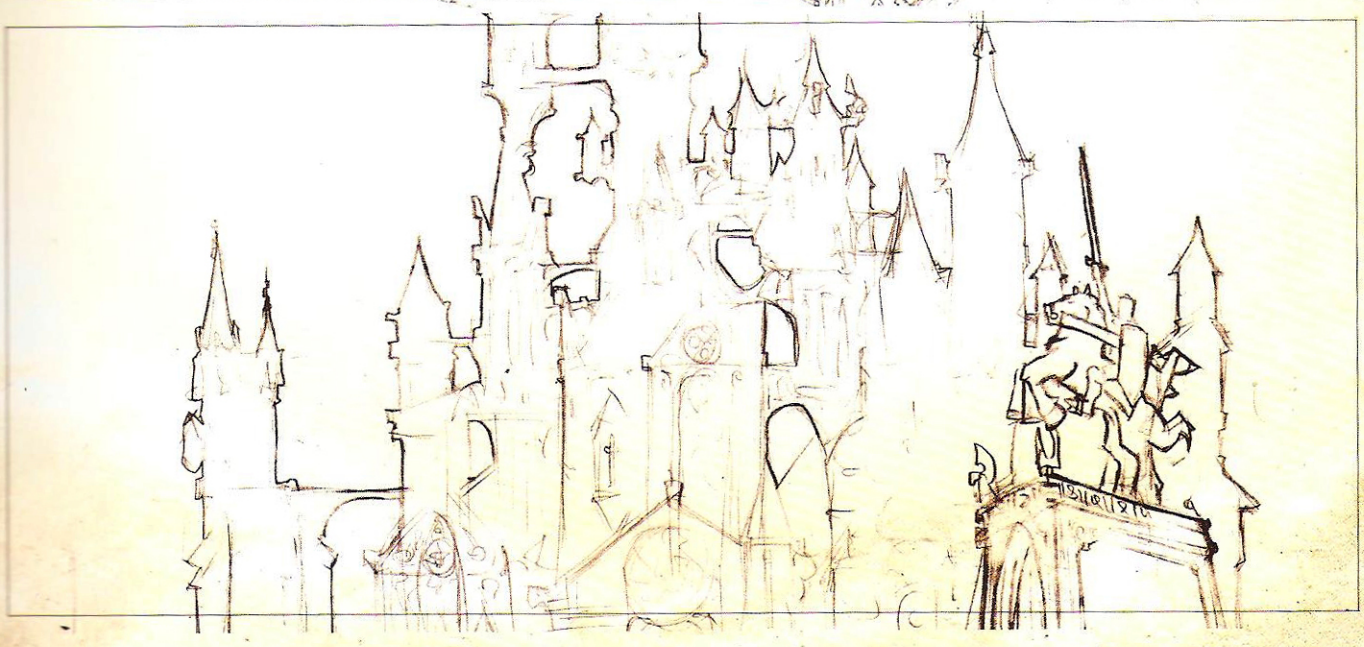




Cities

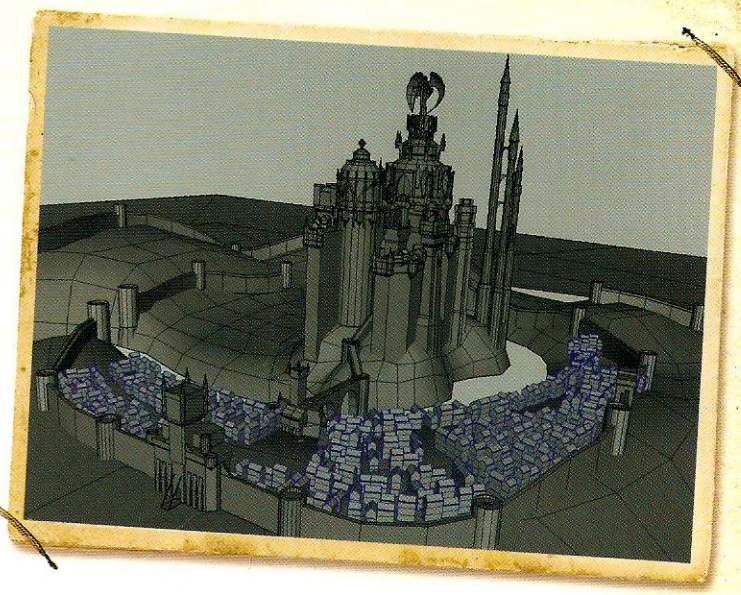


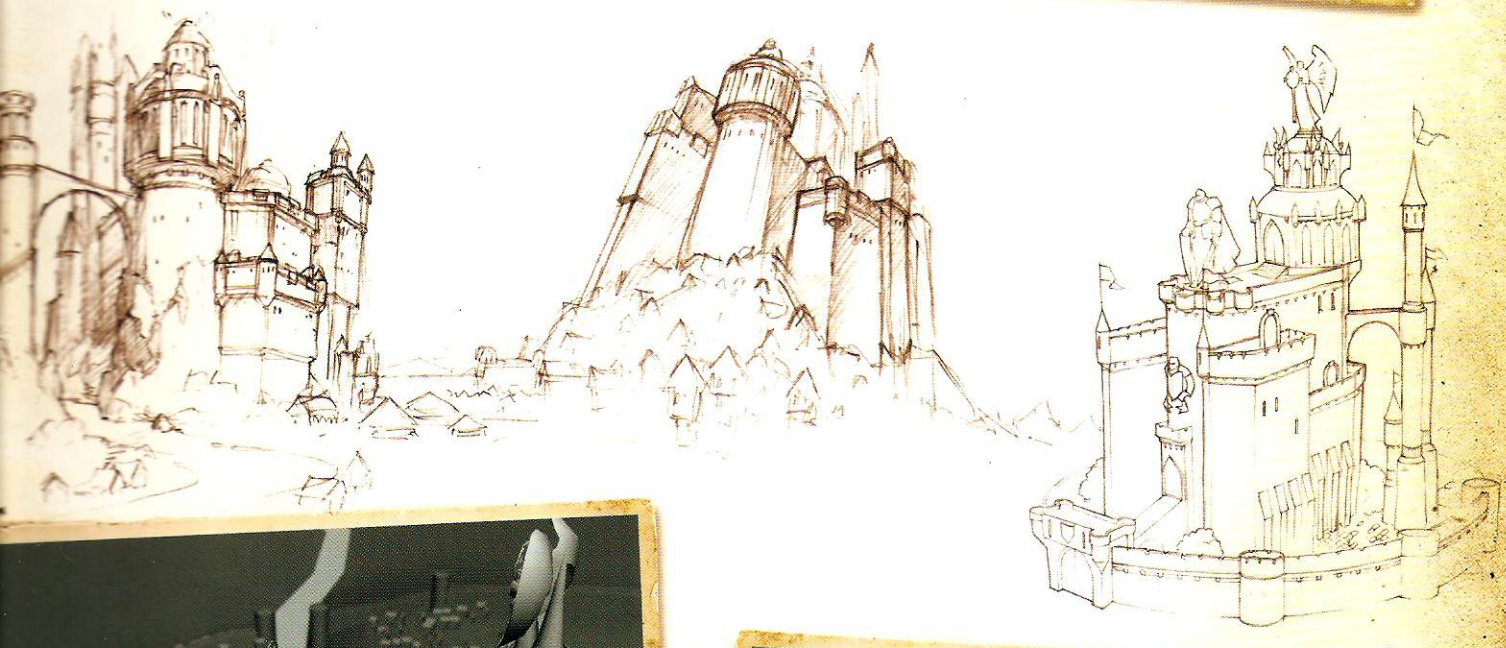


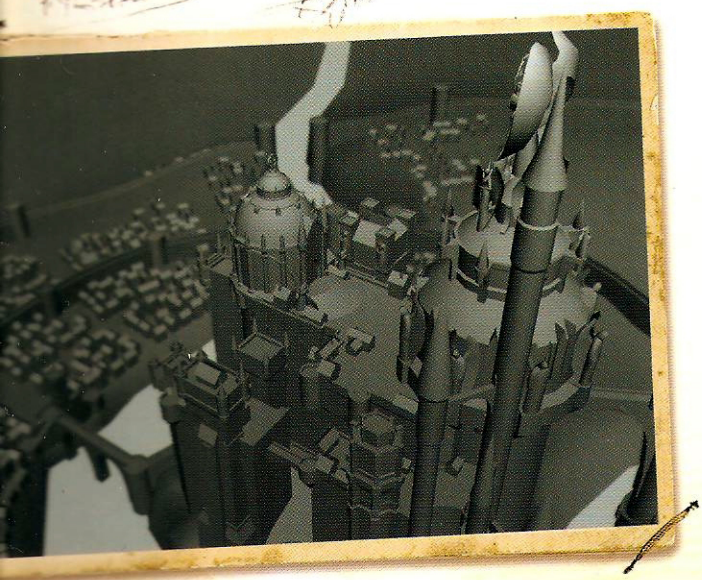


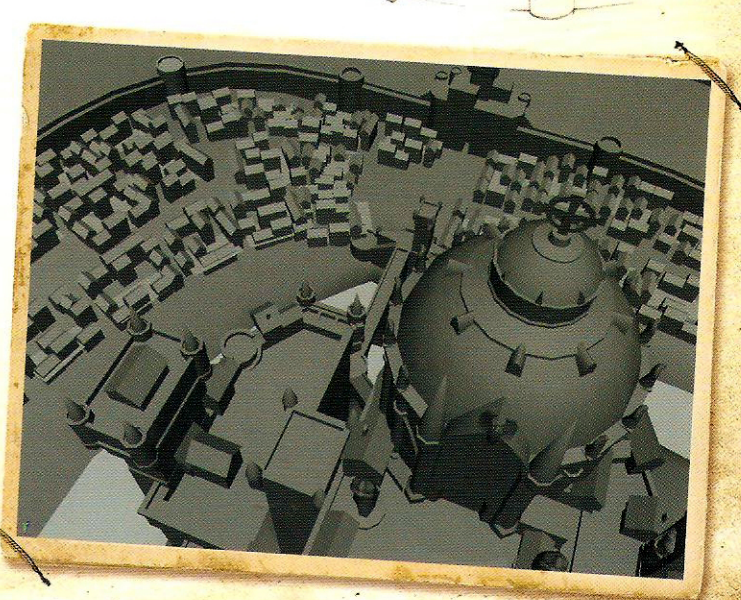
Haven

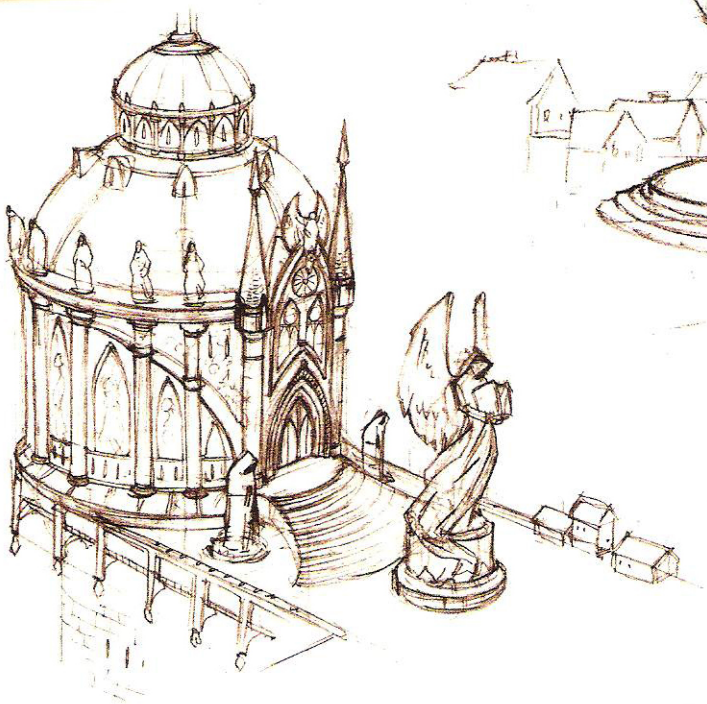
Griffin public architecture is heavy and ornate. Every inch is covered in sculpture, statues, and the like. Stone is the preferred building material, particularly for cities and noble houses. Most cities are built around a central castle and keep, and the homes of nobles generally have protective walls and at least one defensive tower. Smaller buildings, farmhouses and inns are generally made from wood, and most cottages have thatched roofs. The average farm has a central house and two outbuildings, one for livestock and one for storage and seed. The countryside is marked with stone and post fences, and there are standing stone sites scattered across the hilltops.

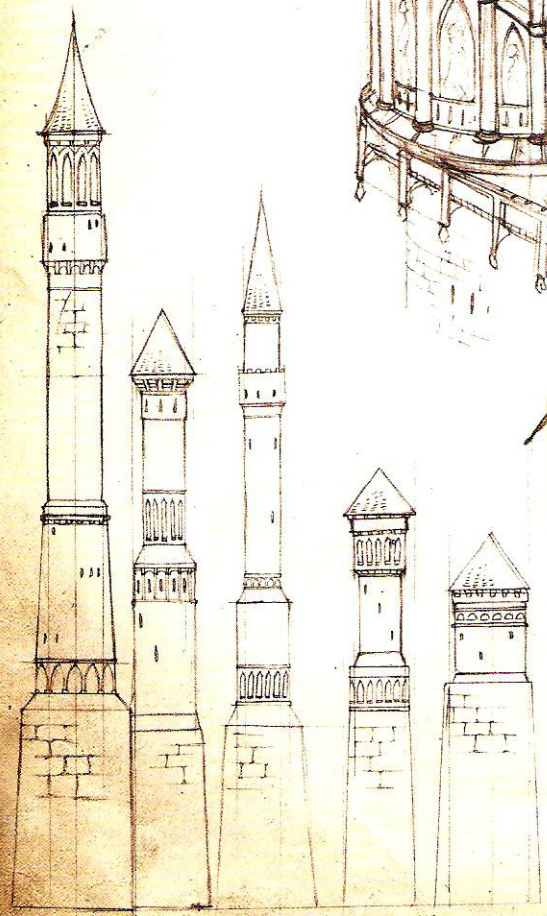


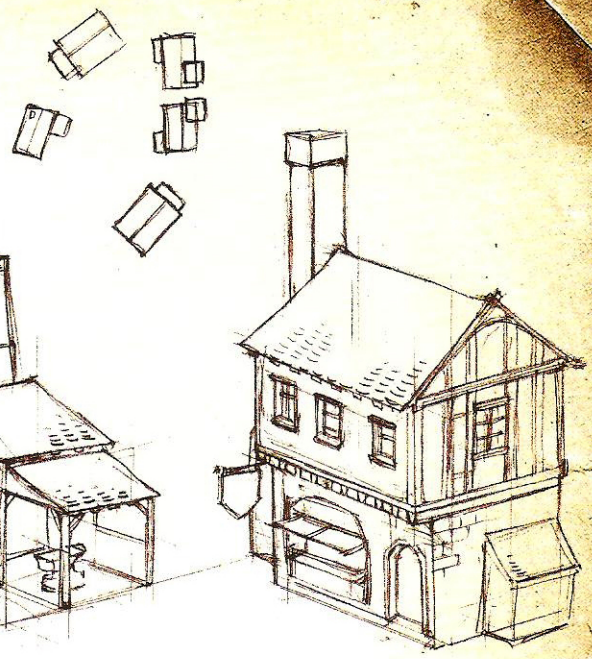


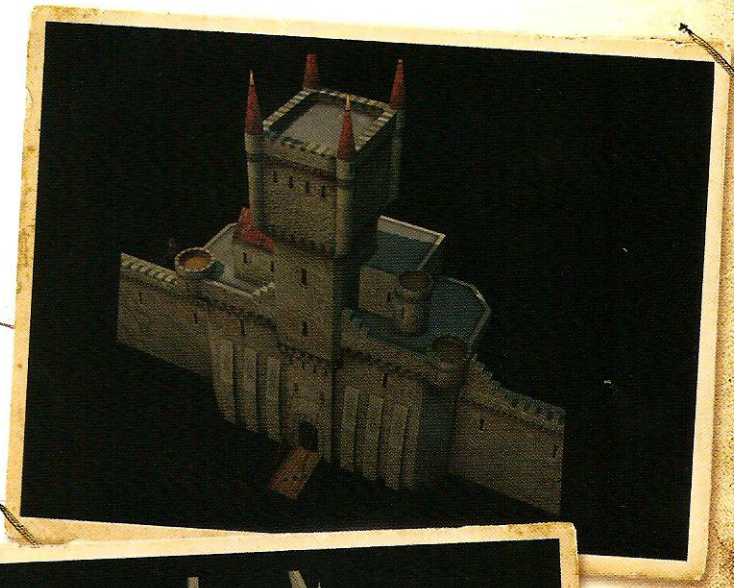






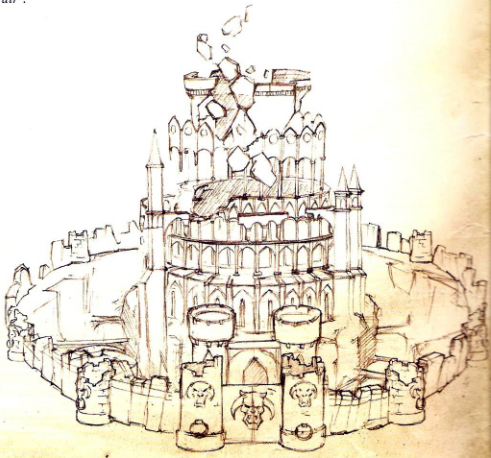


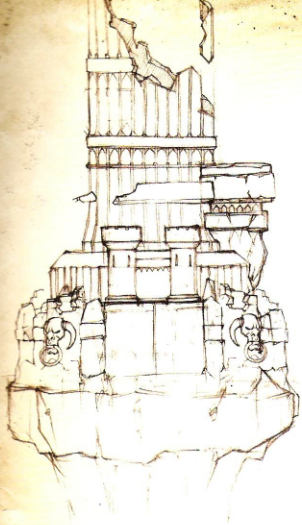




Inferno

Demon architecture is designed to intimidate and built entirely by slave labor. This makes it massive, threatening, and eminently impractical. The basic shape of a demonic building is the ziggurat, or step-pyramid. These have thick walls, and many soar to hundreds of feet in the "air".

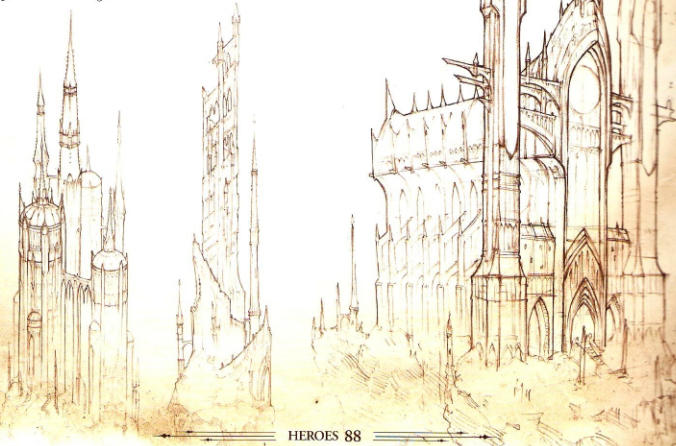




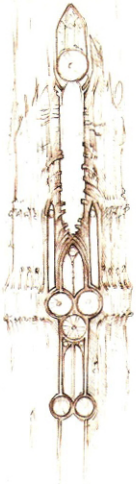
The average Demon city is surrounded by a high, thick wall, at least fifty feet in height, far taller than any ladder could ever dream of reaching. The gates are made of heavy red-hot iron, studded with spikes. Inside, the buildings are all variations on a theme, each trying to outdo the other in height, number of gargoyles and the like. Every Demon's home is built for defence, so the interior is a mix of huge audience chambers for entertaining (or holding court) and complicated corridors (for confusing and slowing attackers).

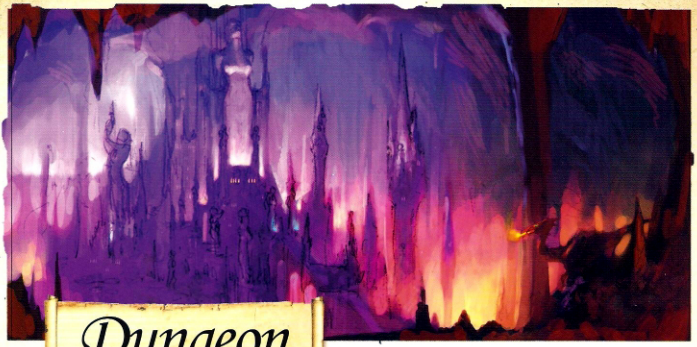
Necropolis

Necromancers were once wizards from the Silver Cities, and they still favour the tower as their main residence and temple to their Spider Goddess. The tallest of these towers is the single spire of Nar-Ankar, also called the «Wailing Needle». The Necromancer's favourite construction material is the cracked black stone of the plains of Heresh, making it seem as if entire cities are drinking in the light of day and swallowing it down.



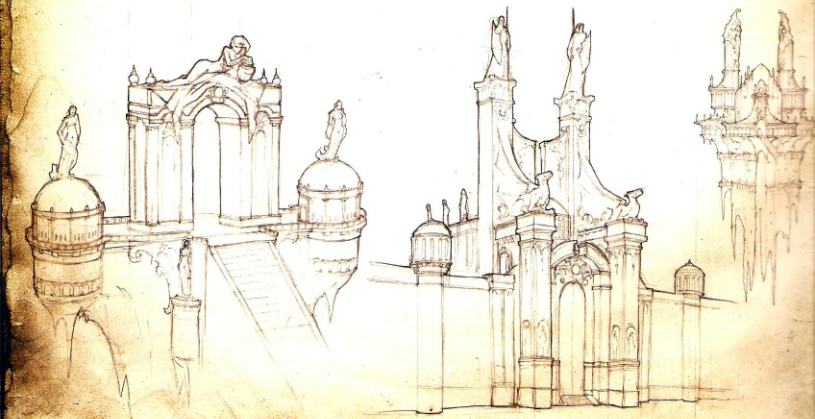
Underground complexes are more ornate, but still laid out for functionality. Dissection theaters and laboratories can be found here, great auditoriums so that all might watch and be instructed by the experiments they view. Resurrection chambers are down here as well, along with abbatoirs, cells for prisoners, and the great Necromantic libraries that supposedly hold every book ever written.



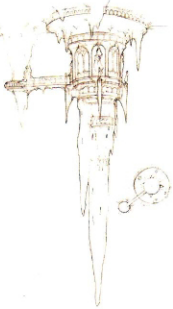


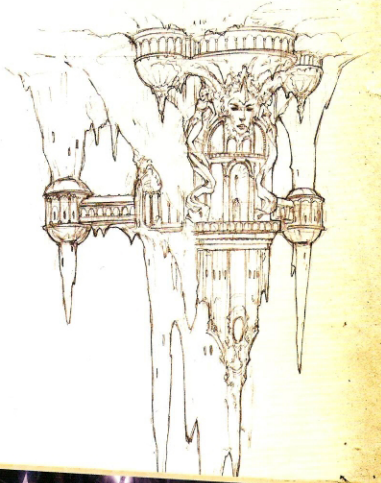
Dungeon

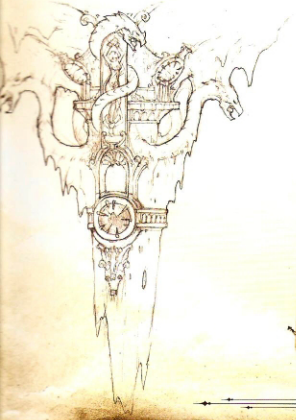
Dark elf architecture is a conscious rejection of the fluid organic style that elves prefer. Brick, adobe and most of all hewn stone - these build the walls, temples and homes of the dark elves. The structures are angular, all right angles and sharp lines, a conscious scar on the landscape of the caves. Windows are high and narrow, the better to prevent assassins from climbing in, and most family dwellings have several lines of defence built into them. Inside, ceilings are high and rooms are spacious. Dark elves are masters of mosaic and painting, and it shows in their homes.



Every dark elven city has several major common buildings. The arena, used for spectacles, punishments and executions, is carved out of the earth itself. It usually stands next to the temple of Malassa, the Shadow Dragon, a towering building that soars as high as the cavern ceiling will allow. Decorated with sculptures of dragons and effigies of the martyr-queen Tuidhana, founder of the Dark Elf nation, these structures are merely the front of extensive complexes that include sleeping quarters, libraries, laboratories and inquisition chambers.

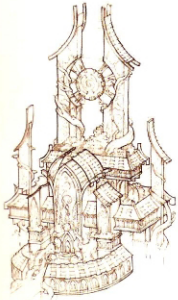


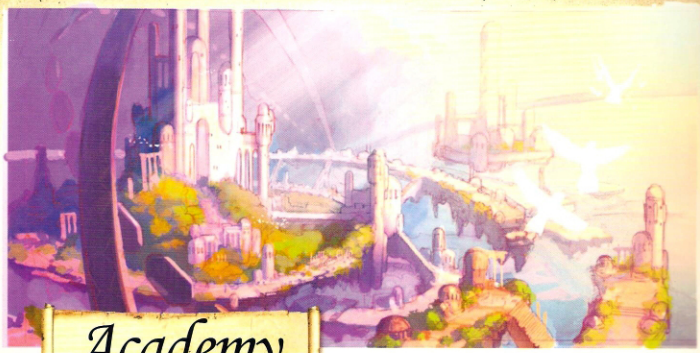




Sylvan

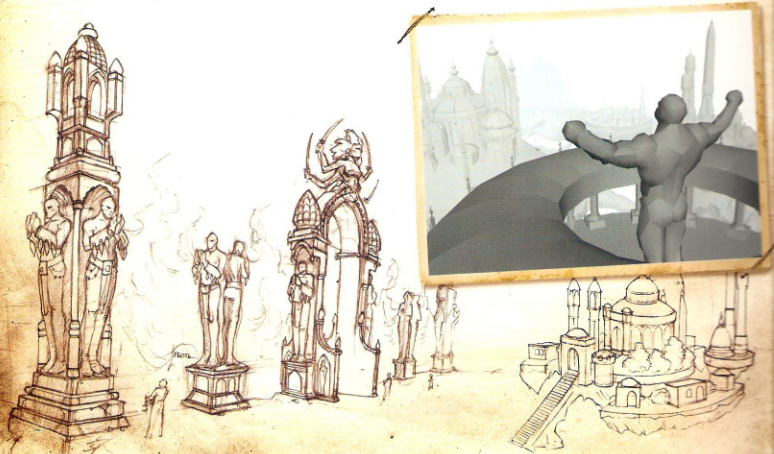
Elves have a unique knack for getting trees to grow into the shapes they desire. Many of their structures are still living, the trunks of the trees having grown together to create walls and roofs. Other structures are built up in the trees, with rope bridges, walkways and ropes to ascend or slide down connecting them. Treetop structures tend to be open to the sky.

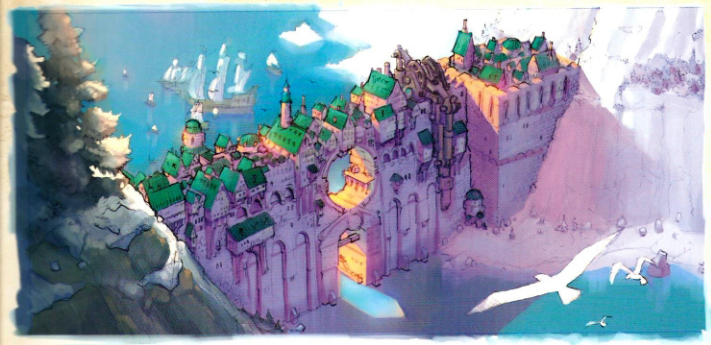


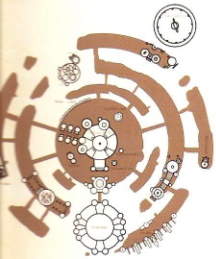


Academy

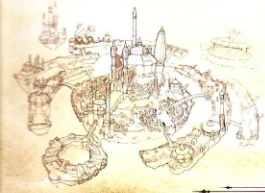
The defining feature of Wizardly architecture is the tower. Tall, slender, and unmarred by windows, except at the very top, these structures house the wizards' laboratories, libraries, and living quarters. Lower levels hold servants, supplies, enchanted creatures, and whatever else is necessary for the wizards' comfort. Ordinary citizens are forbidden towers, though the wealthy build what are essentially small castles.

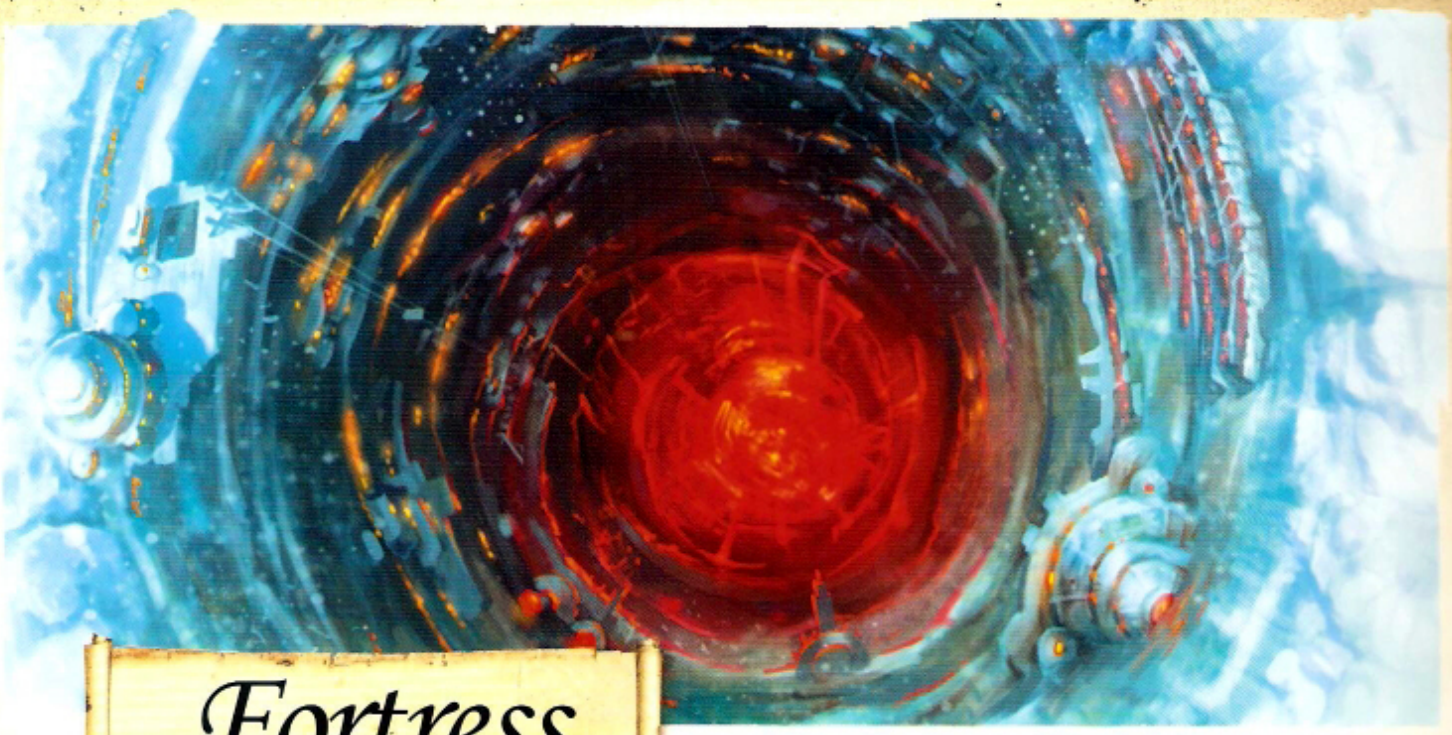






Each city is surrounded by a huge circular wall. This reinforces the notion of the Circle of Nine's authority and provides a potent defence against enemies. Every city is also home to a Necropolis, where dead wizards are laid to rest behind magical protections, lest their corpses fall into the wrong hands and be used for foul magics.

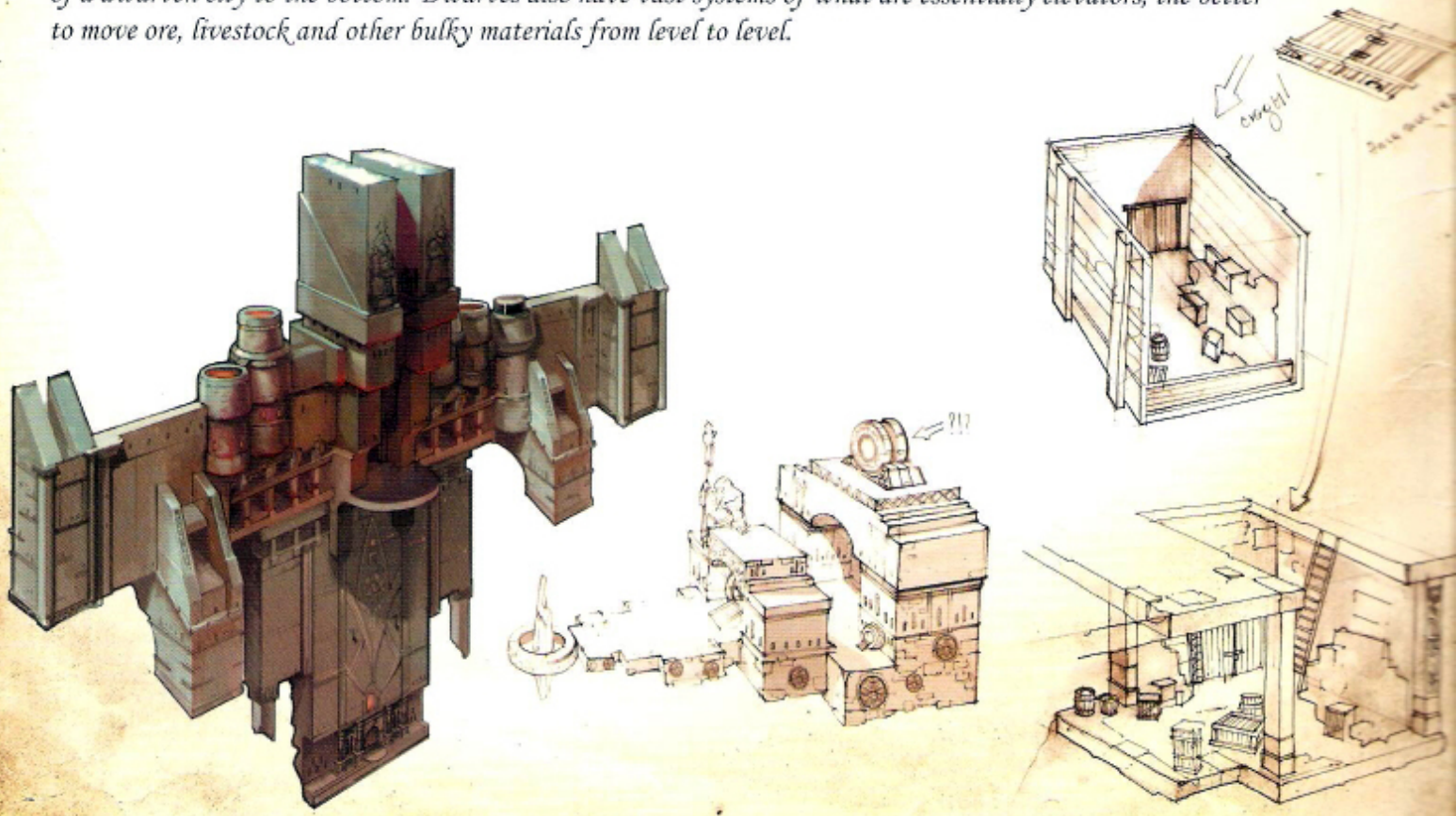




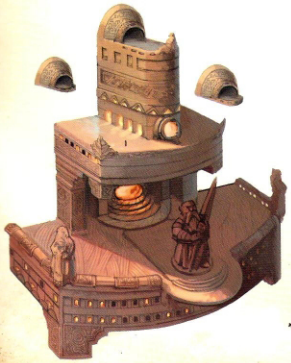
Fortress

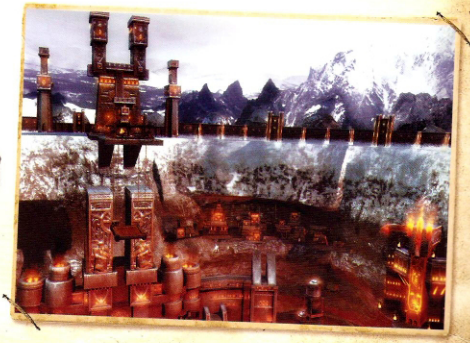
Dwarven warrens are built in concentric rings around a central great hall. Main avenues run off in the cardinal directions, with smaller tunnels in between. Dwarven architecture also runs in three dimensions, with plenty of stairs, wells, and galleries honeycombing the mountains under which they live.

Stairs are generally shallow and spiral in shape, the better to suit short dwarven legs, and they can run from the top of a dwarven city to the bottom. Dwarves also have vast systems of what are essentially elevators, the better to move ore, livestock and other bulky materials from level to level.



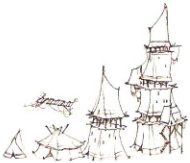
In design, dwarven architecture tends toward circles and runes as motifs. They're not fond of representational art, preferring instead geometric patterns. Buildings, roads, and stairs are built to be sturdy, rather than decorative, and only central meeting halls and the like are decorated with ornate stonework. One decorative field the dwarves do specialise in, however is Dwarven "lava gardening". A dwarven family can have a centuries-old garden of molten rock and carefully tended obsidian, cooled to precise specifications over the years.

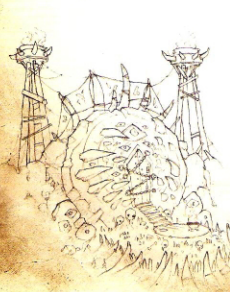


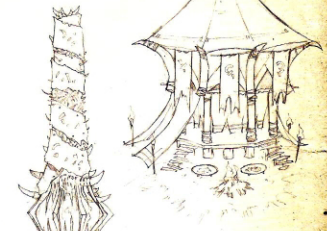


Stronghold

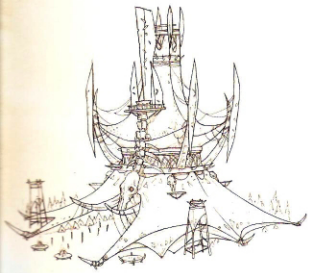
Tents can't really be called architecture, can they? Still, orcish tents are highly distinctive in both shape and colour. Drab on the outside, they are decorated richly with woven rugs and tapestries on the inside. Orcs also build small covered wagons – out of wood that they raid from their neighbours to the West.

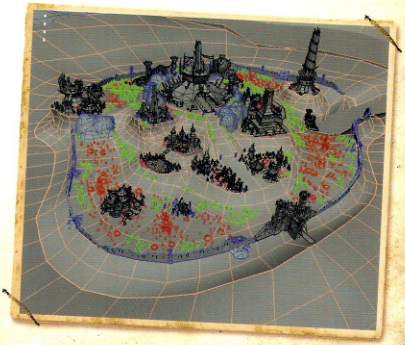




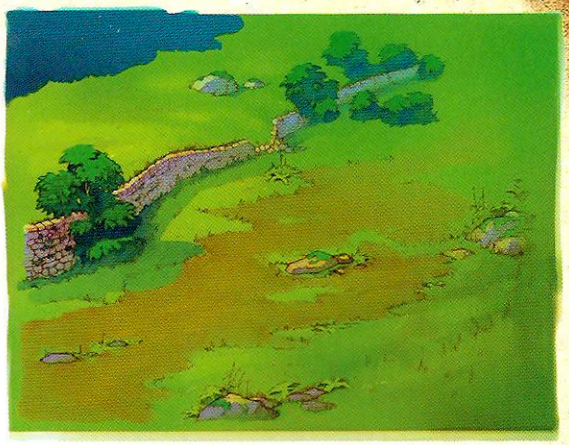


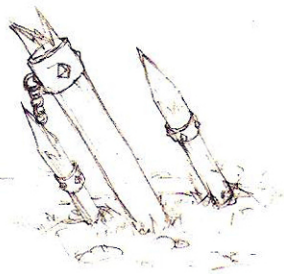
These wagons are often brightly painted, the better to stand out in the vast expanses of prairie. Some orc tribes have begun experimenting with "sails" on top of these constructs, the better to move swiftly across the land.

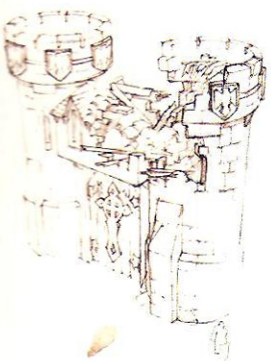


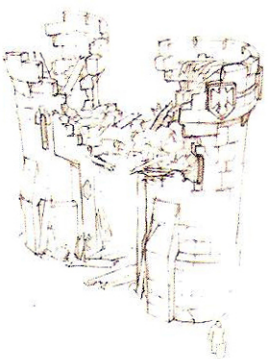


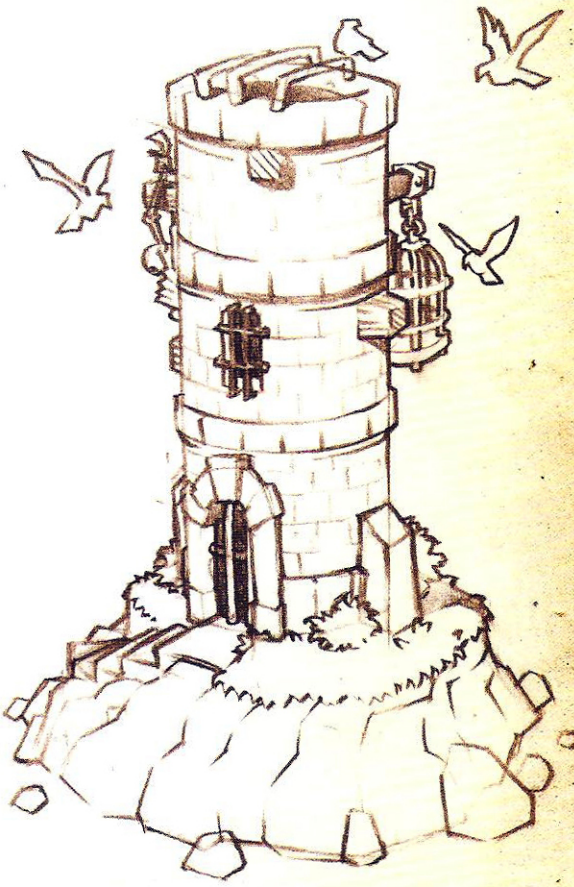
Backgrounds

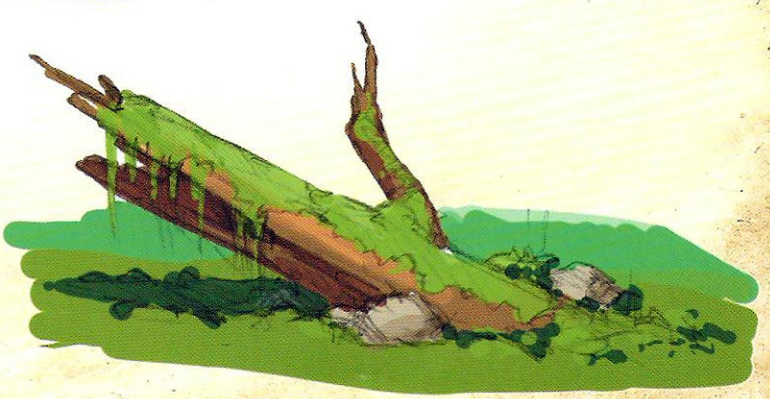




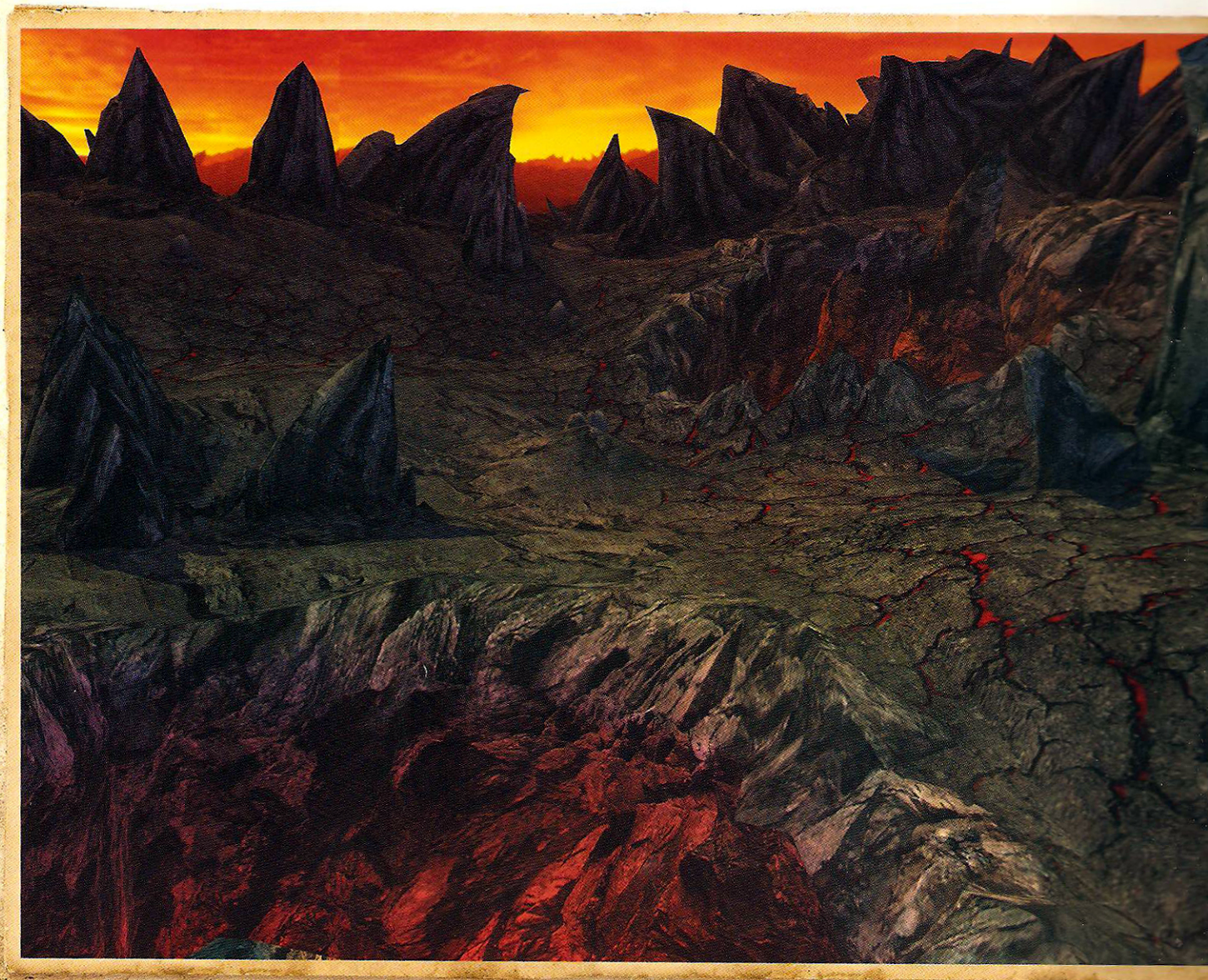


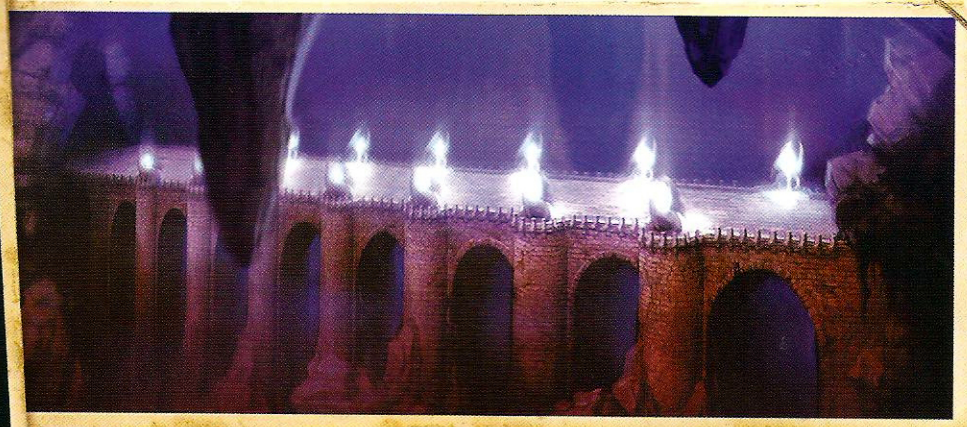


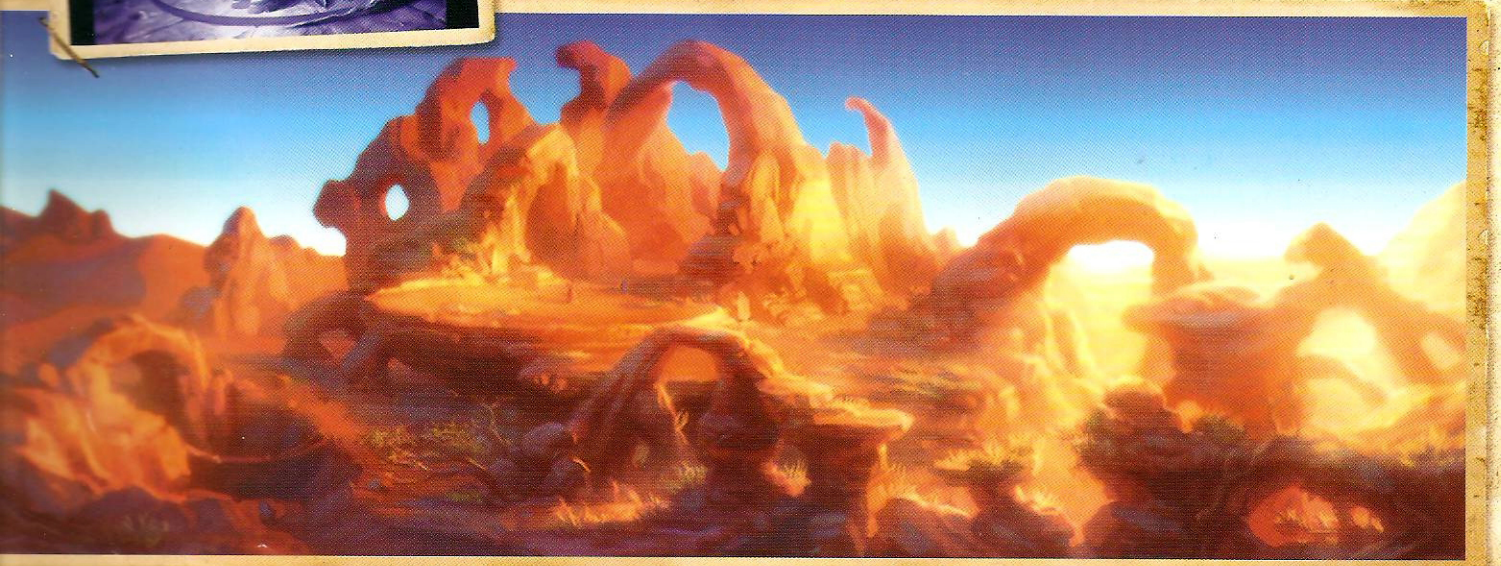


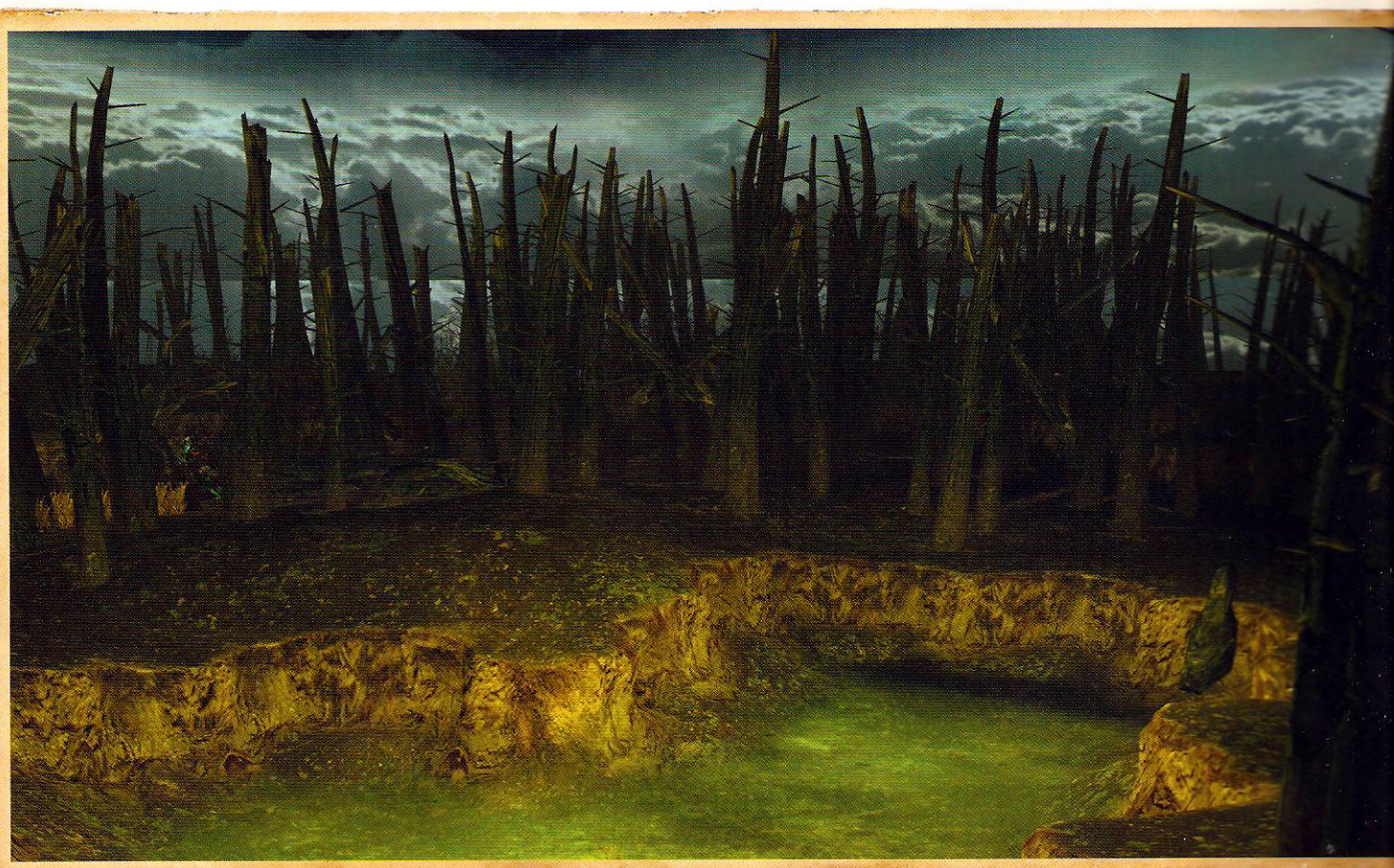


©2004 Rival Interactive





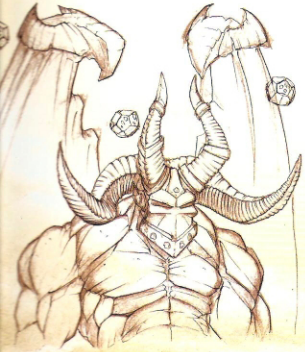


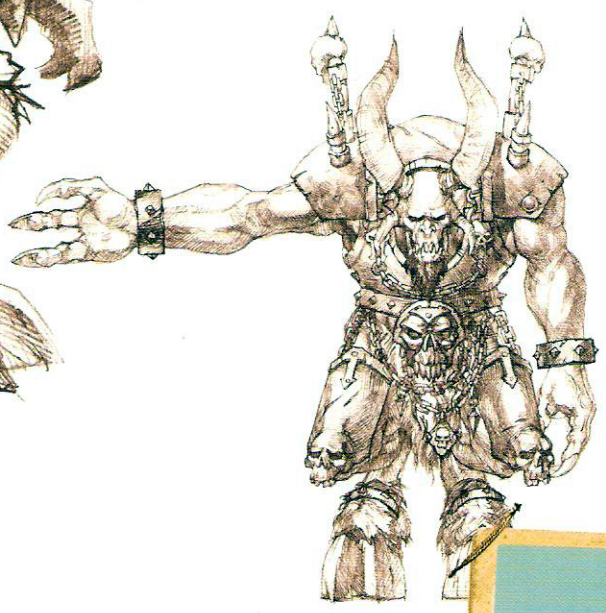


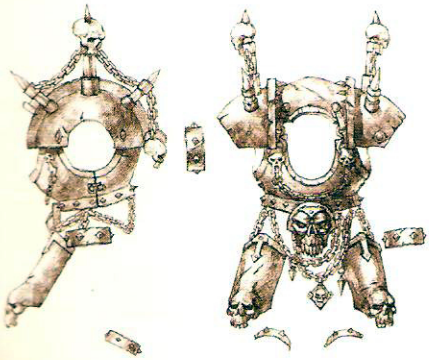
Creatures

Devil

One of the major creatures in the Heroes series has always been the highest-ranking Inferno monster, the Devil. We had to do it right. The first proposals suggested that it emerge from the ground, too large to enter the battlefield. Other ideas were closer to a warrior from the flame pits, and these studies were later used for the Inferno hero model. We were unsure yet if it would be wearing armour or not; whether it would use a weapon or fight with claws and teeth.

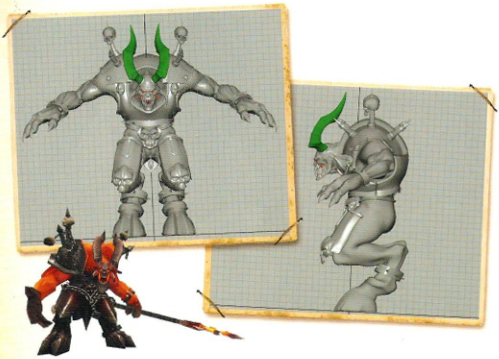






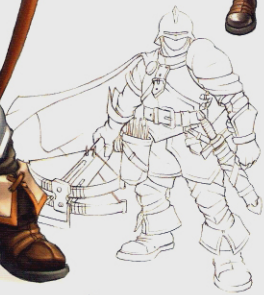
We finally settled on a full character, more or less humanoid, with half-plate armour and a two-handed weapon. The weapon design is based on an inverted version of the angel sword, reinforcing the opposition between the two creatures. Flames were of course mandatory for the upgraded version of the Devil, as for all Inferno creatures.

The devils are the ultimate representatives of chaos on Ashan. Their power and agility are unequaled amongst Inferno troops. These monsters have access to the infernal reality plan at will and can, therefore, teleport on the battlefield. The archdevils have the supreme ability to call for Pit Lord reinforcements straight from inferno.

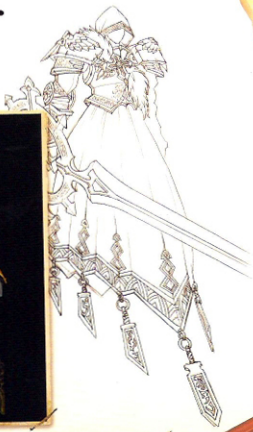


Once the design was approved, it was only a question of how far this creature could be used within and around the game. We wanted to use it for promotion and packaging, if the visual was good enough. The first in-game versions confirmed that it was a major player on the battlefield, so a high-definition model of the devil was done for multiple uses.

Archer

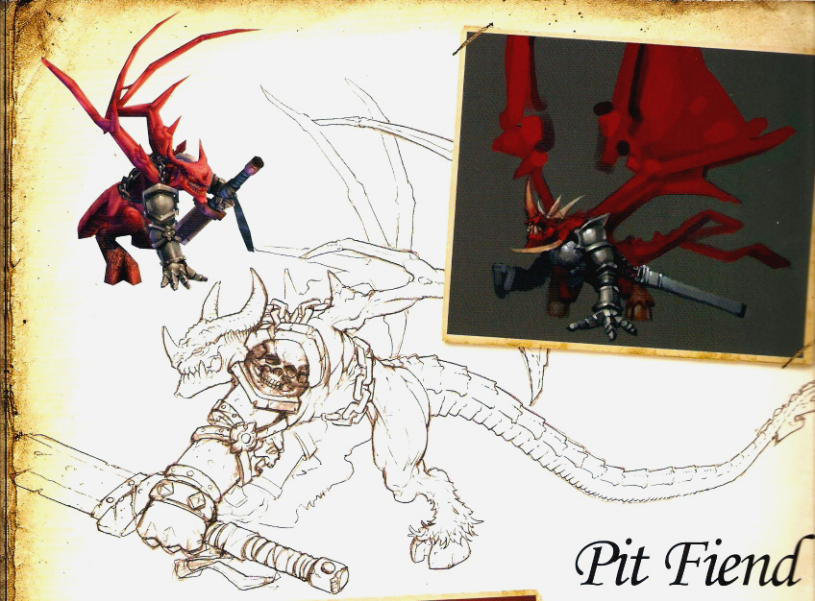


Angel

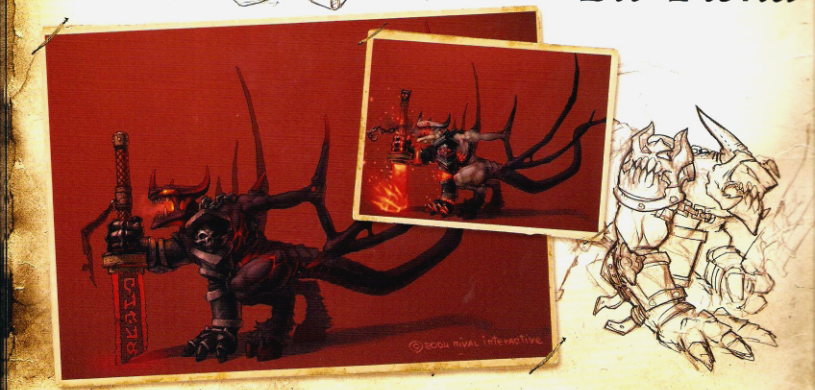


Priest

Squire

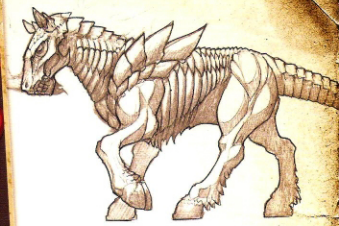


Pit Fiend



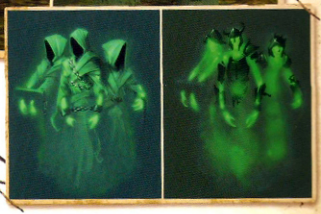
Succubus

Cerberus



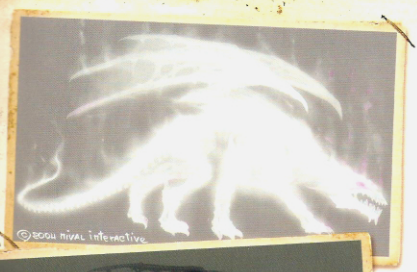
Nightmare

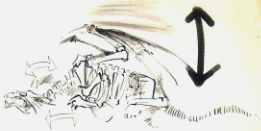
Lich

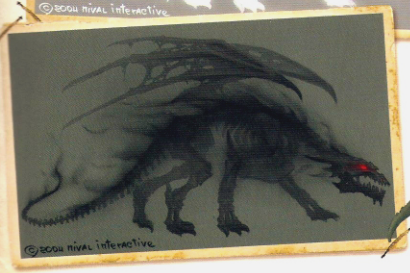


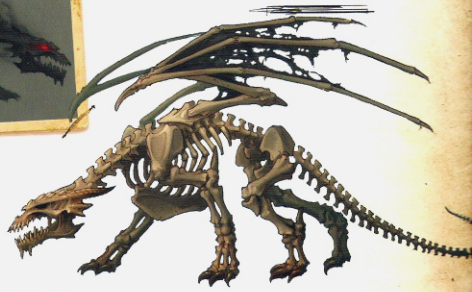
Ghost

Skeleton









Bone Dragon

Hydra

Black
Dragon

Shadow
Witch

Minotaur

Blade Dancer

Armband / Legband (leather)

Shoulderband (metal)

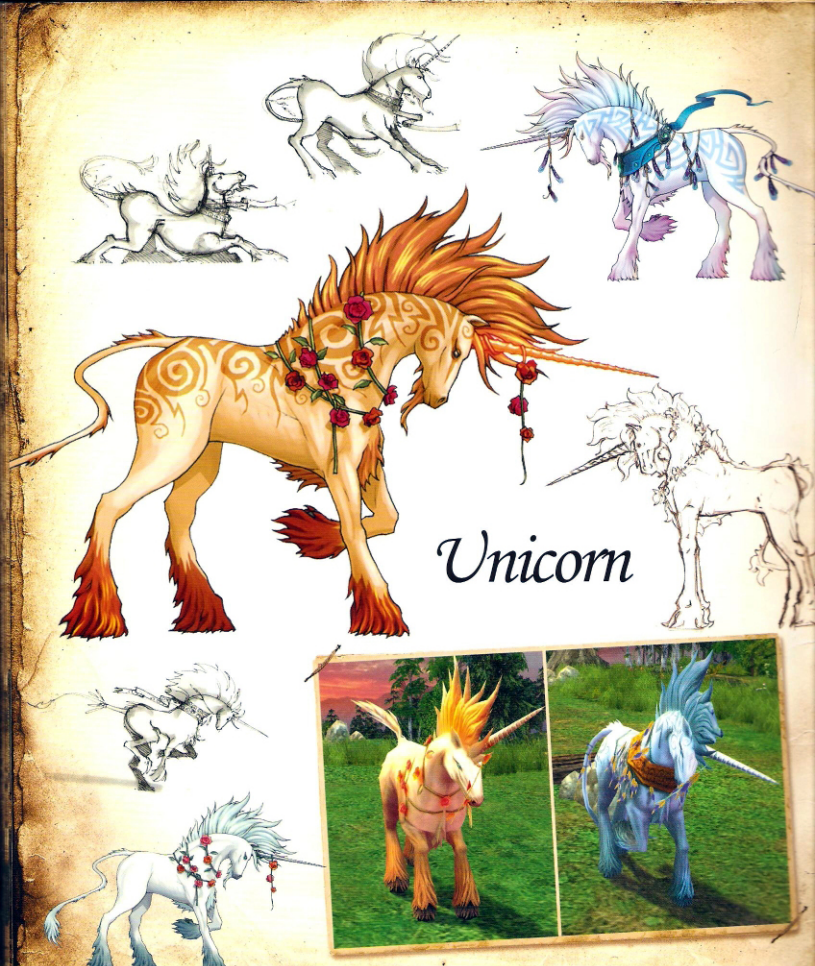
Belt (metal)

A B C D E

A B C D E

Blade Dancer belt

Pixie

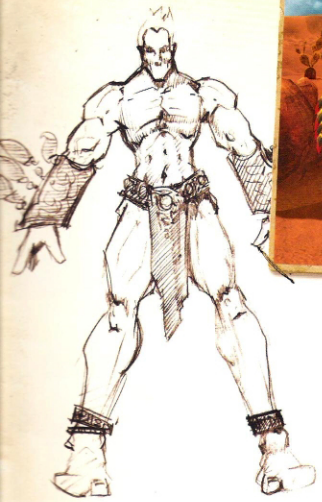

Unicorn

Druid

Gremlin

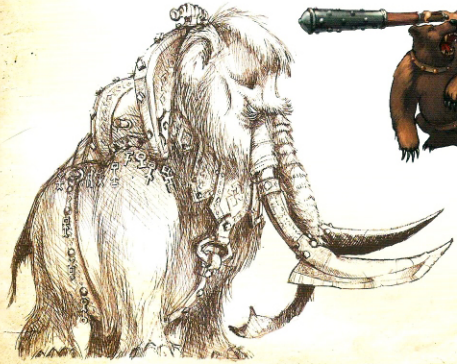
Golem

Djinn



Titan

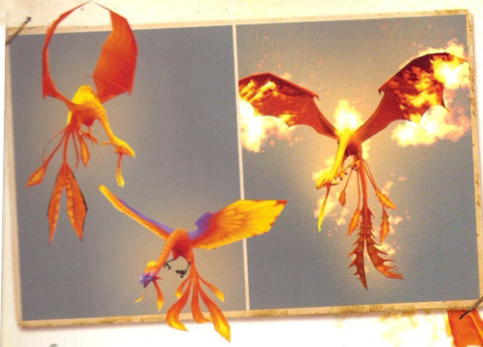
Dwarves

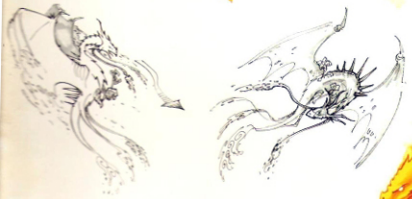


Orcs

Elementals

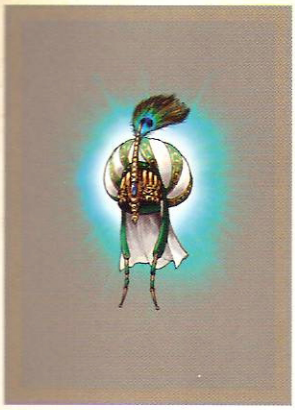
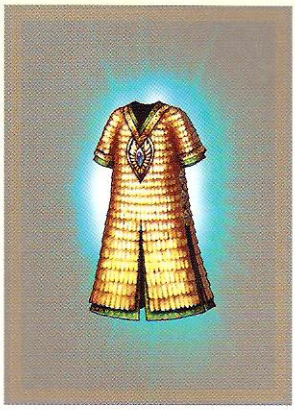
Dark Knight

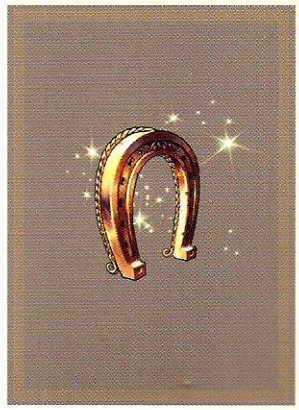
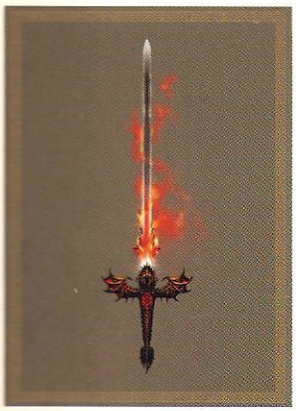


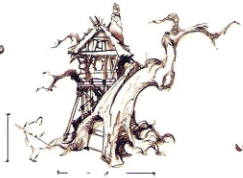


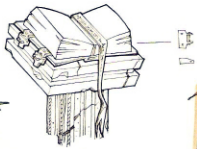
Phoenix

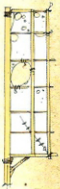
Structures and Objects

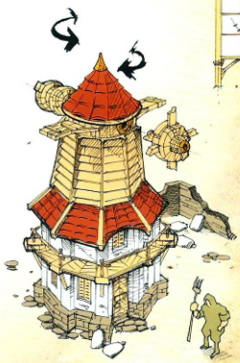



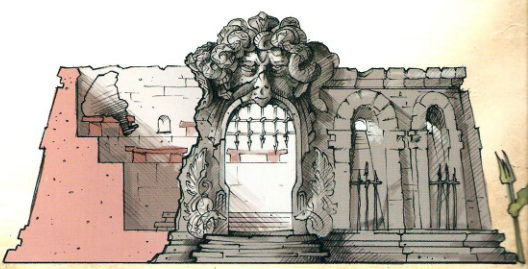



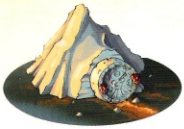


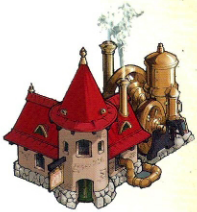
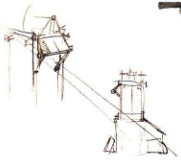


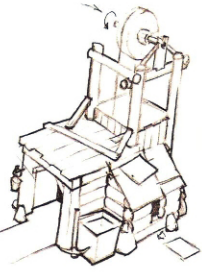
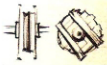


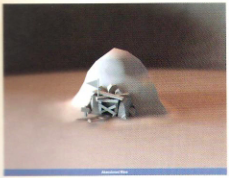


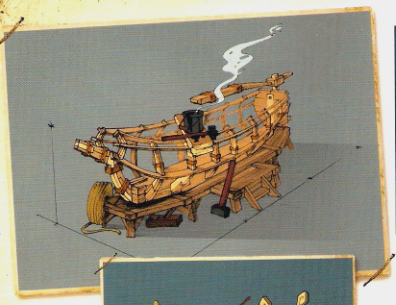


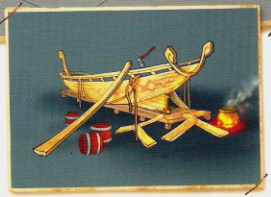
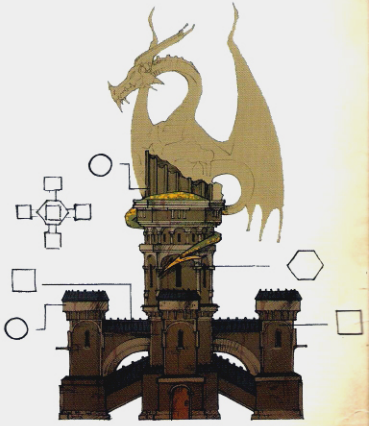
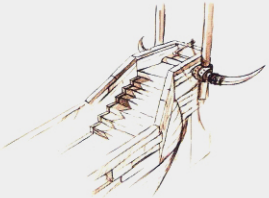


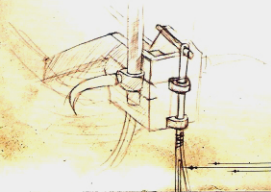



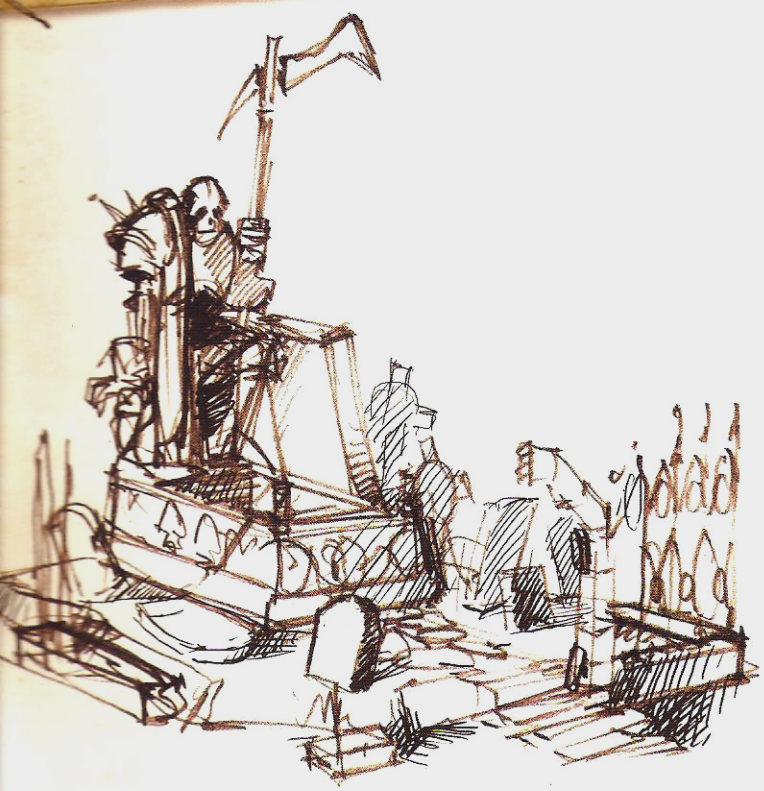



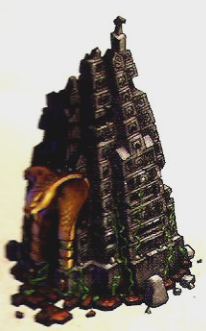


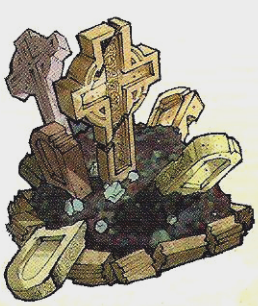


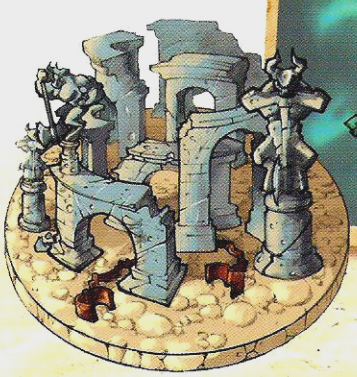






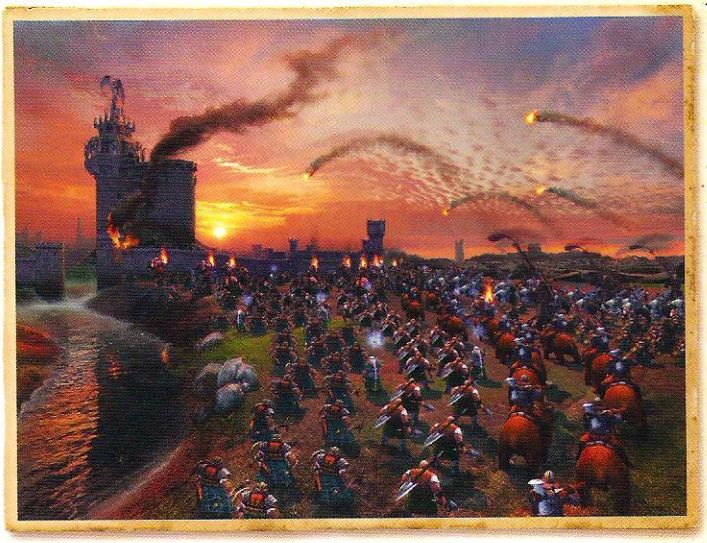


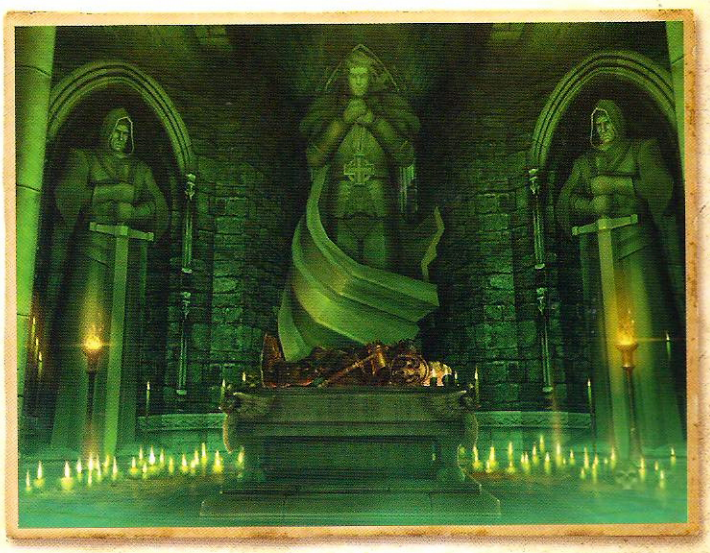


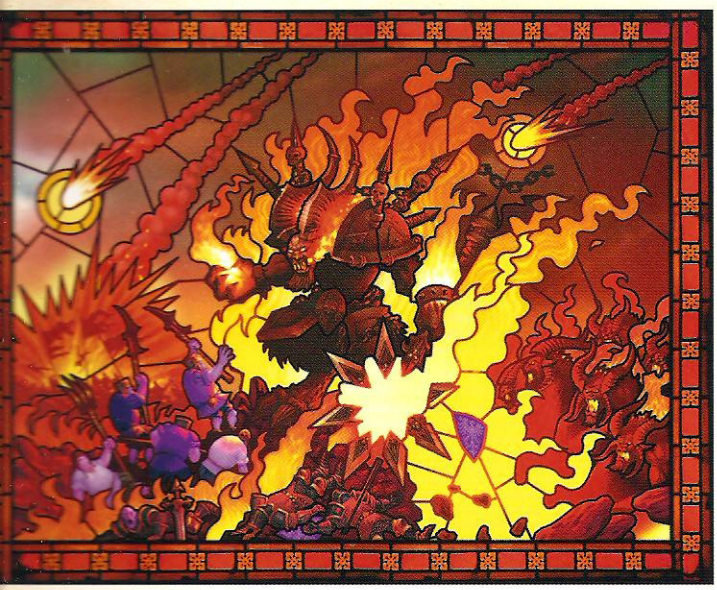


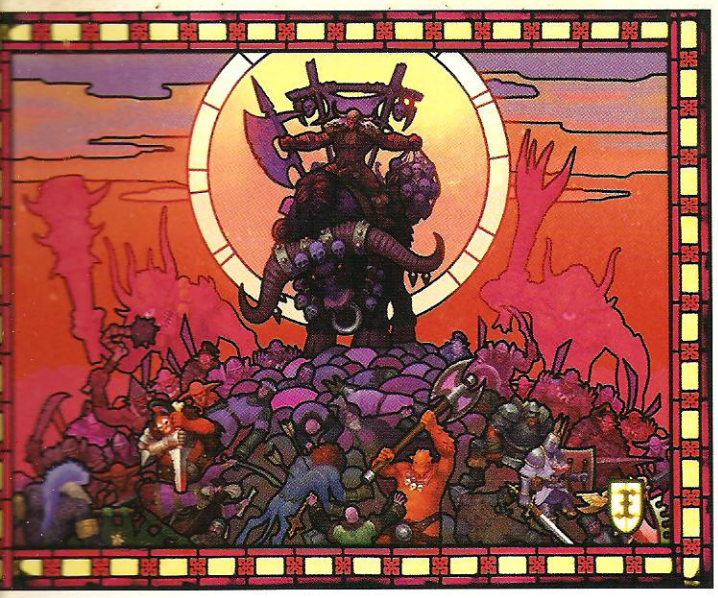


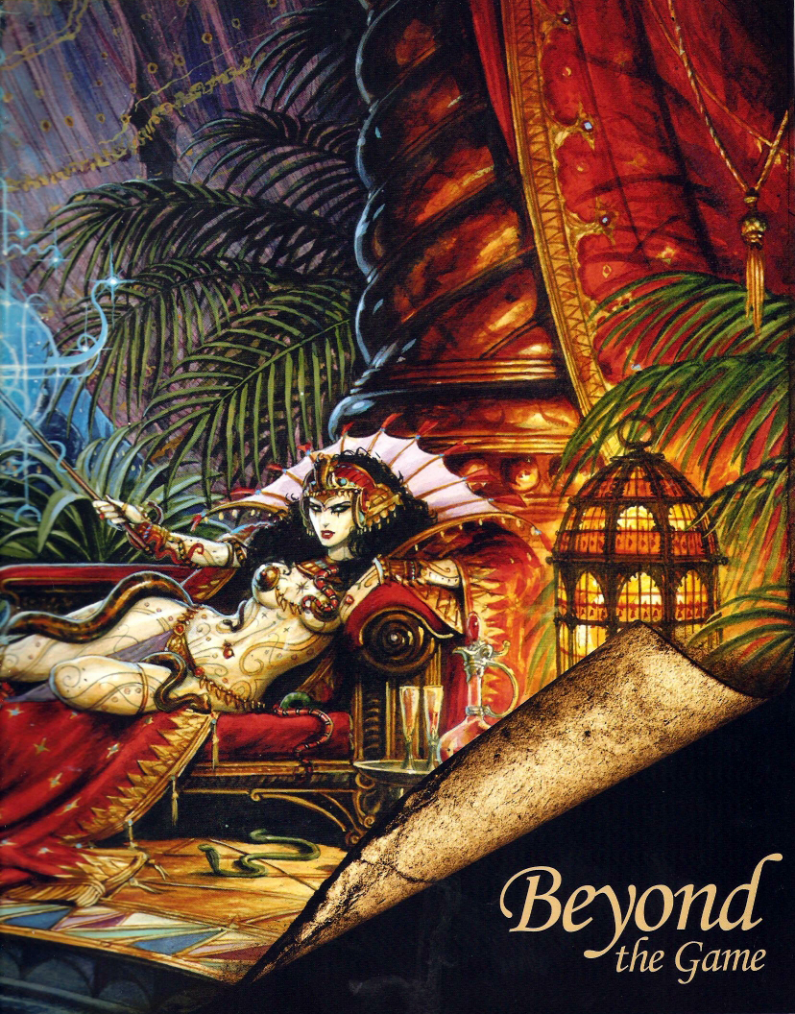
Screens

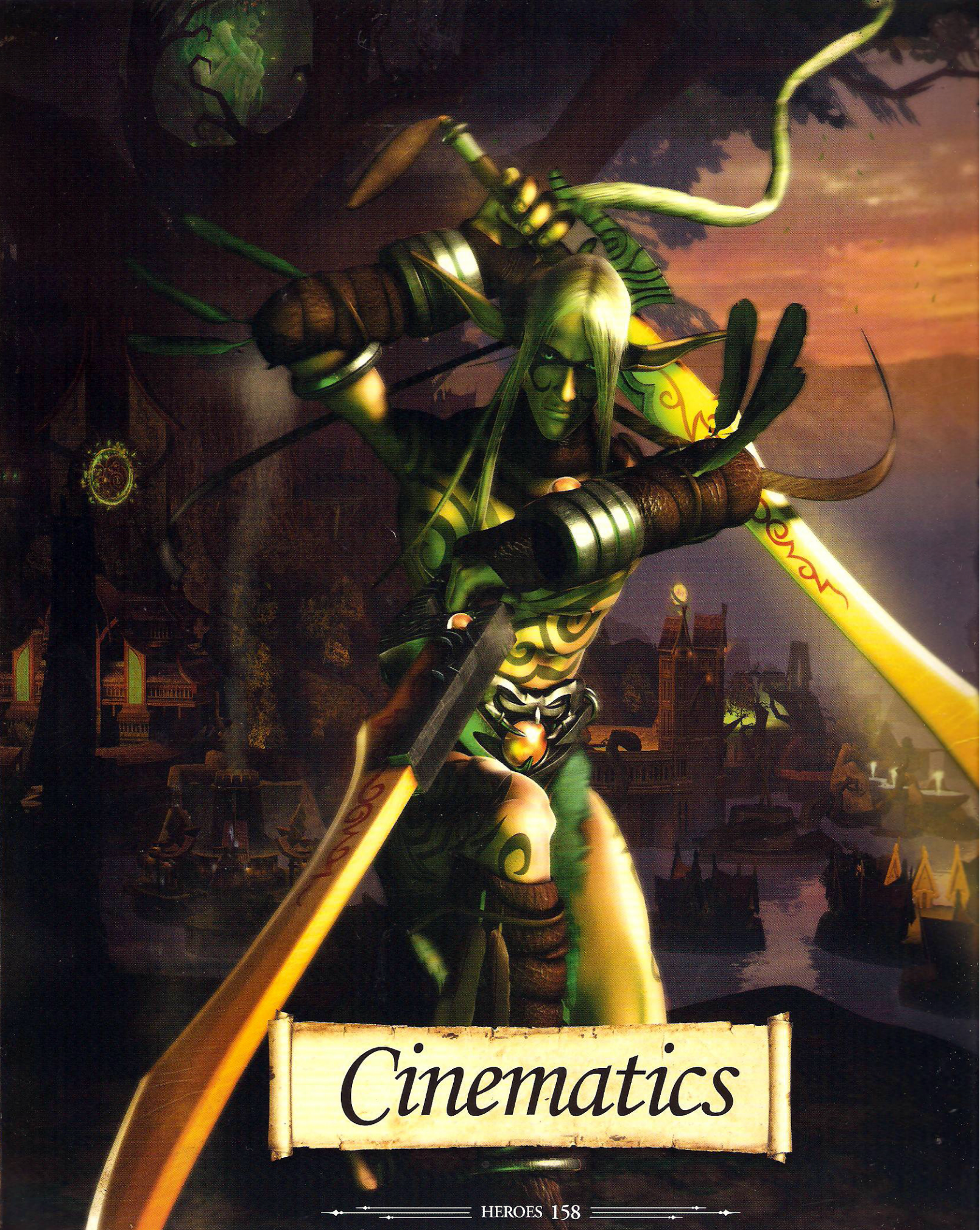




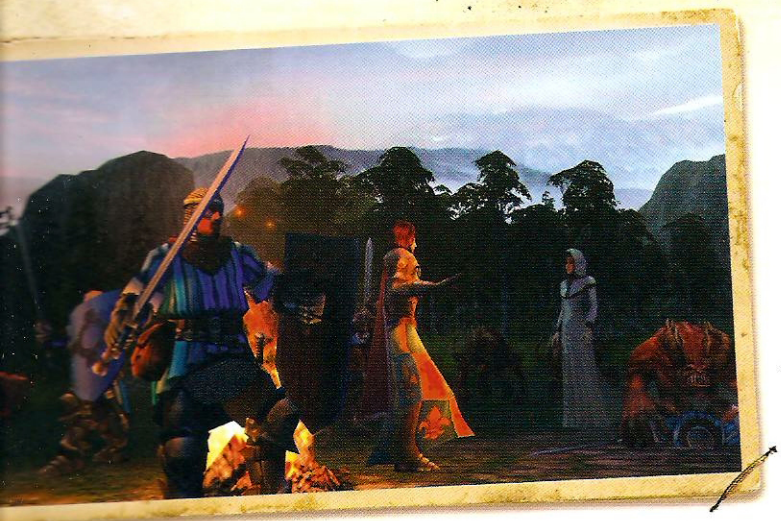


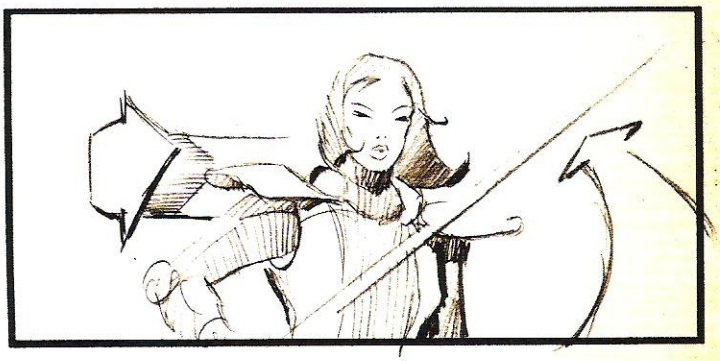


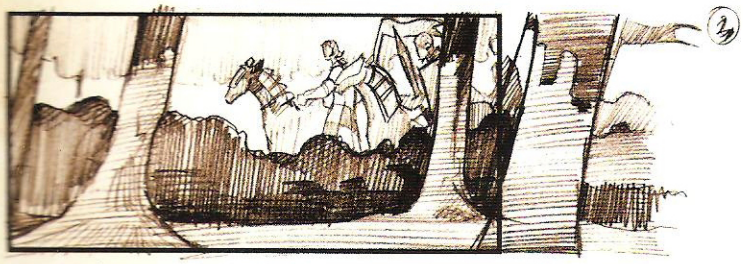

Beyond
the Game

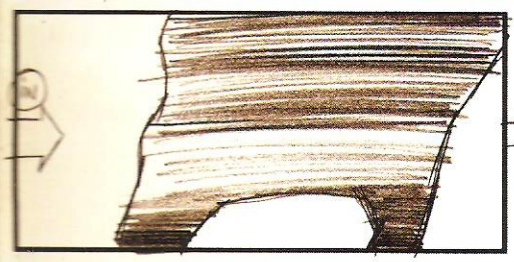


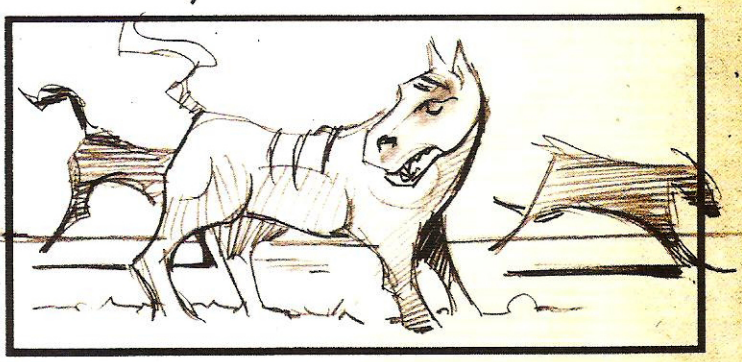
Cinematics

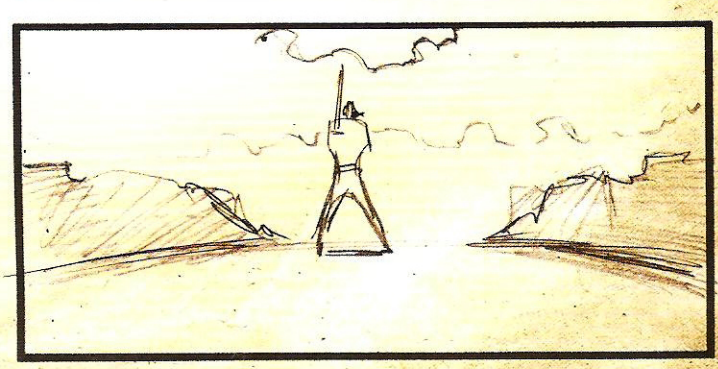


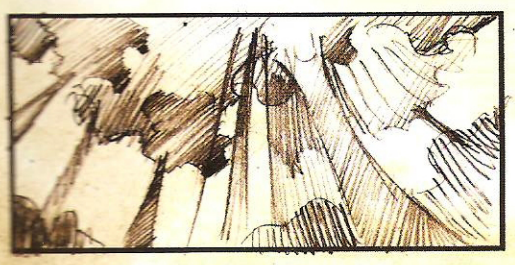


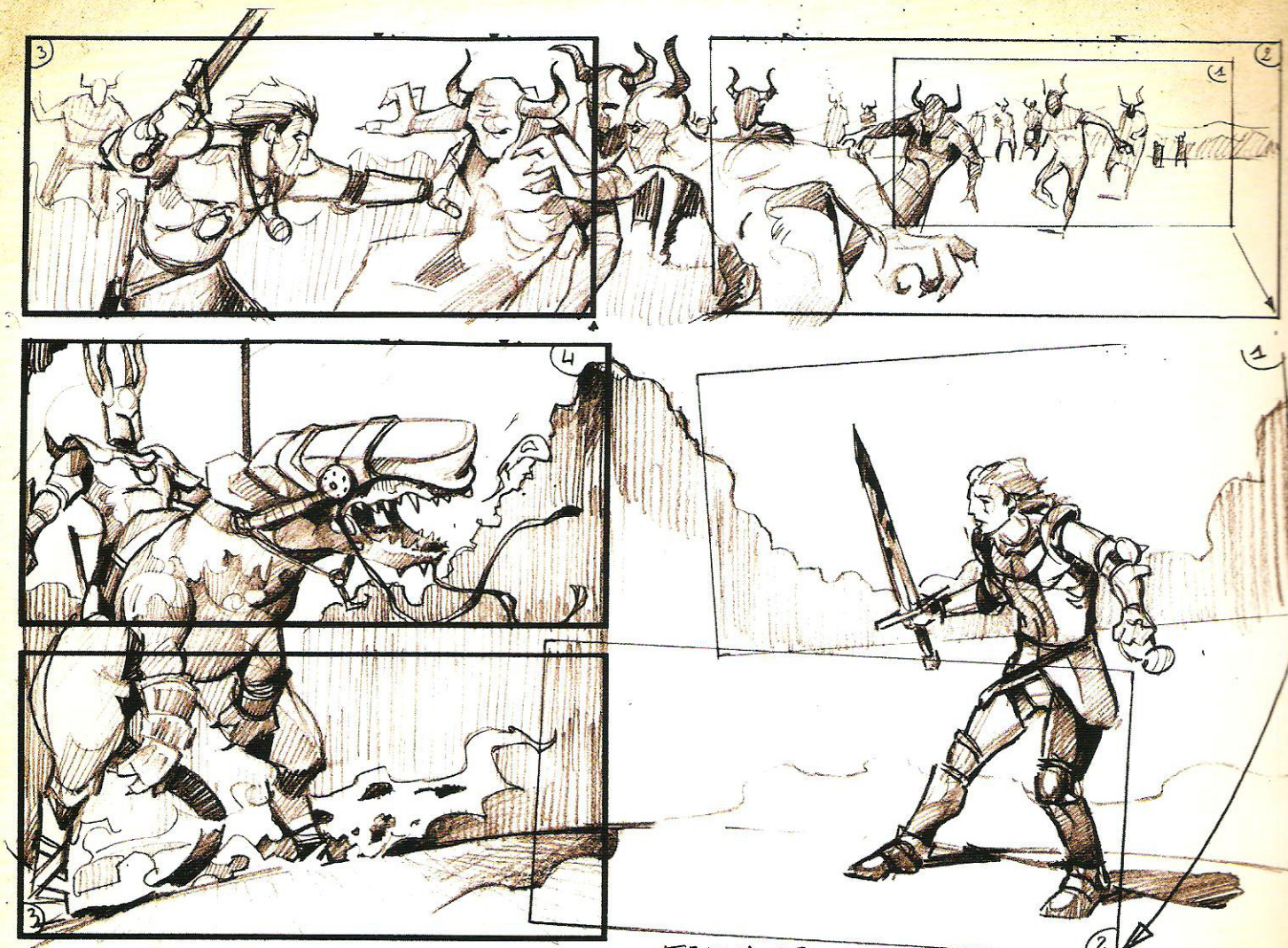


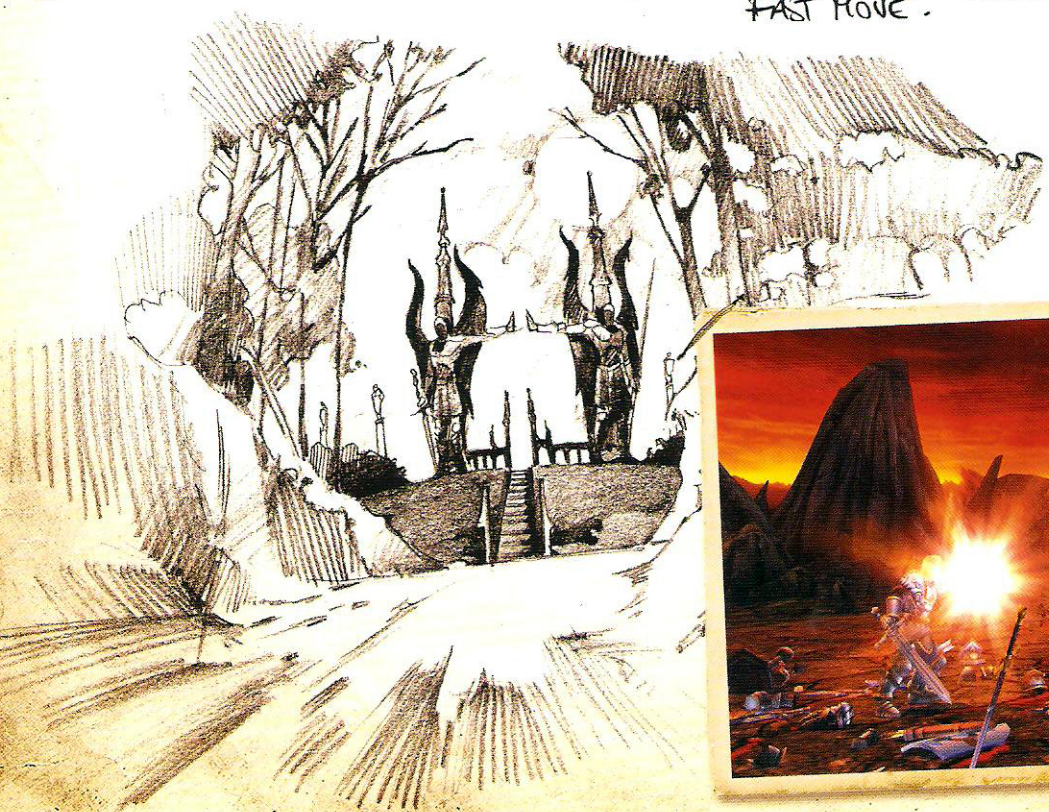


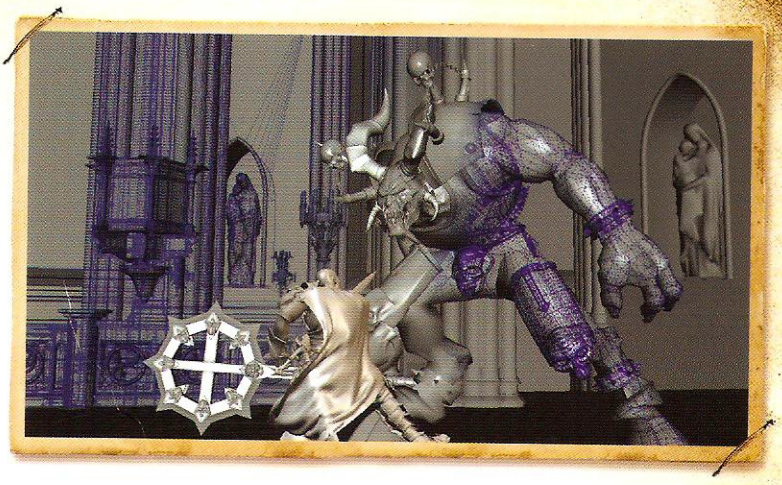







FAST MOVE.





The opening and closing cutscene movies were made by 3dbrigade.com in Hungary. The team had already had a lot of experience in making 3D movies for games (Sudden Strike 2, Axis & Allies, etc.), but there is no question that this posed one of the toughest challenges the company had faced.

The first step was to adapt the screenplay, while building the models for the main characters. We also had to scale the dimensions of the church to accomodate the three metre tall Archdevil and his mighty weapon.

To give the scene more realism, the animations were recorded using 3dbrigade's Vicon-8 motion capture technology. There were some difficulties, of course, with the Archdevil's ungulate legs and with the synchronisation of his stride and steps.

We paid particular attention to the fight between Nicolai and the Archdevil, because, at the end, the demon had to fall through a stained glass window. For the fencing moves and animations we recorded movements of stuntmen from the Mathias Rex Joust Club.

We also had some difficulties with simulating the cloth, armour, and hair of the characters, as these were rarely seen together in 3D animated movies.

Each of the characters had to be rigged with 150 to 200 locators to get these details and, to top it off, we had to add realistic flame simulations onto the Archdevil's body.

The church itself was also a major assignment. The final environment objects were built with more than two million polygons and included over 400 high resolution textures.

Looking back at all these challenges, it's no wonder that it took one and a half months to render the scene, in spite of the fact that our render farm consisted of 15 dual processor machines. Finally, a lot of post-production effects work had to be done before we reached the final version that you see in the game.

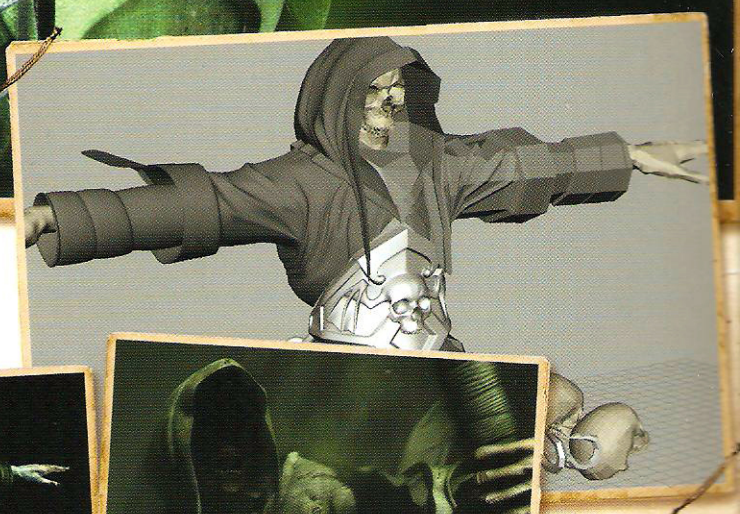
Zsolt Vamosi, studio head, 3D Brigade

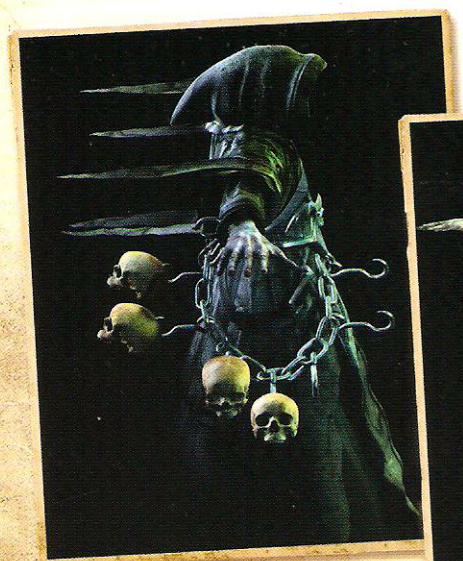
In mem: Arturi Moore A.Q. 1855

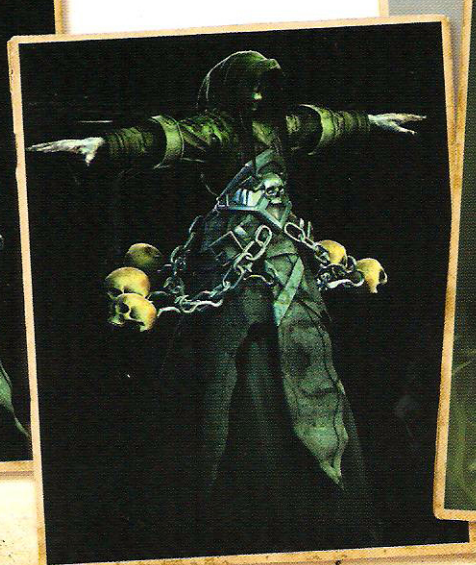
XVII
In mem: Arturi Moore A.Q. 1855

XIV
In mem: Arturi Moore A.Q. 1855

XVII
In mem: Arturi Moore A.Q. 1855





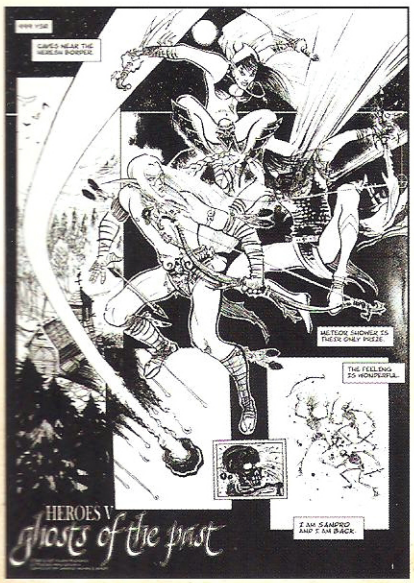


Fan

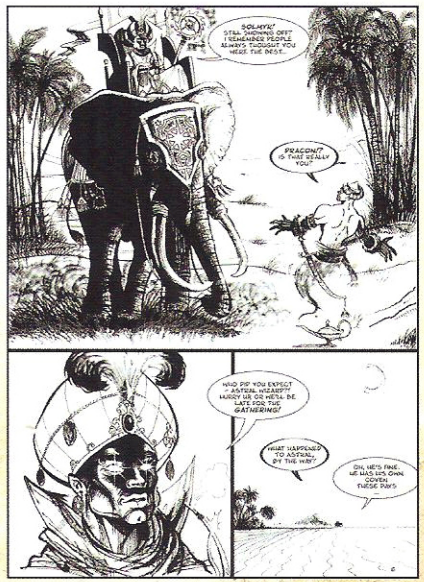
The Heroes of Might and Magic community is quite diversified, and very active. The first contacts were initiated by the fans themselves a long time before the project was officially announced – actually only a couple of months after Ubisoft started working with Nival on the development. The largest communities can be found in the US, Russia, Germany, France and China. But many others had a voice in the exchanges with the team, throughout the game's development, including fans from from Spain, Poland and Israel.

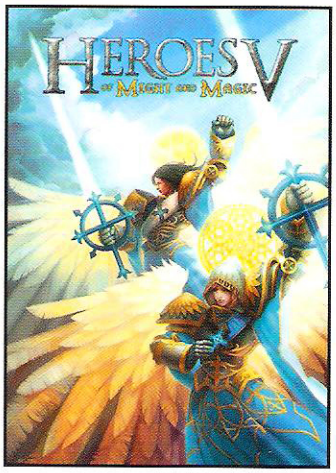
Community

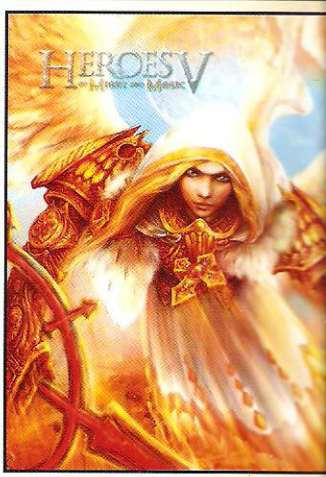
After the release, a fan from Serbia, Vladimir Kuzmanov, created a complete comic series, illustrating the switch from the previous Heroes games to H5. He put a very funny twist on what just might have happened.

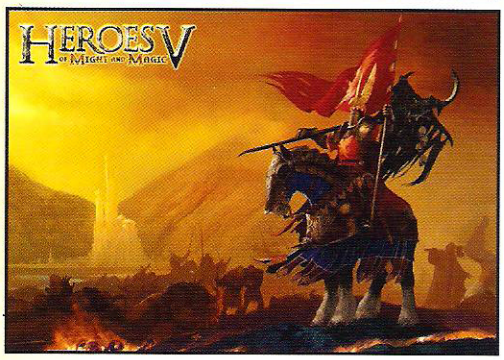

CAVES NEAR THE HEROS BORDER
METEORS SHOWER IS THEIR ONLY PRIZE
THE FEELING IS HONOURFUL
I AM SANDRO AND I AM BACK
HEROES V
ghosts of the past

CAVERNS BENEATH HEROSIA
FACELESS ONE...?
YESSS...?
I HAVE BROUGHT YOU A NEW SLAVE, MISTRESS.
IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE?
YES, OUR TWO SCOUTS HAVE AMBUSHED A SYLVAN ELF AND AMASSIN A NECROMANCER NEAR THE HEROSIA BORDER. HE SLAUGHTERED THEM ALL. HE EVEN KILLED THE TREEHUGGER AND SENT HIM BACK TO THE WOODS
SSSSO, SANDRO HAS RETURNED


SOLMYR! STAR SHEMIRA! GET YOUR ASSES HERE! I SUMMONED PEOPLE ALWAYS, THOUGHT YOU NEED THE DEAD.
DRAGONS! IS THAT REALLY YOU?
WHO DID YOU EXPECT - ASTRAL WIZARDS? HURRY US OR WE'LL BE LATE FOR THE GATHERING!
WHAT HAPPENED TO ASTRAL, BY THE WAY?
OH, HE'S FINE. HE HAS HIS OWN COVEN THESE DAYS

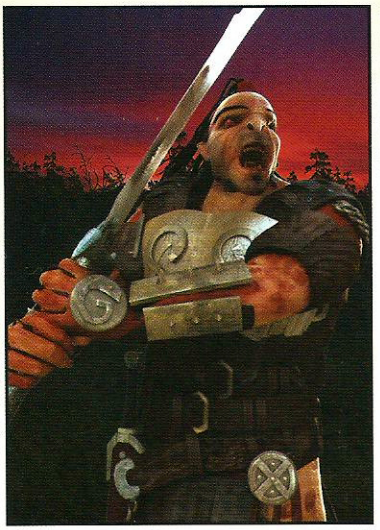
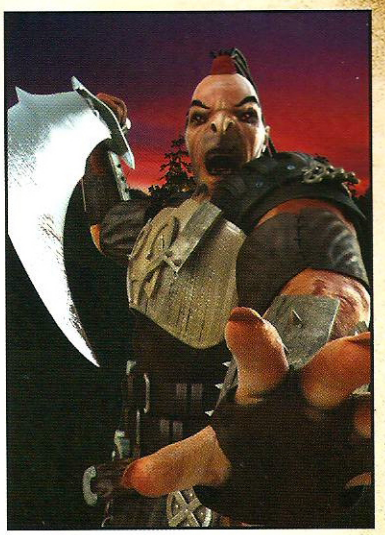






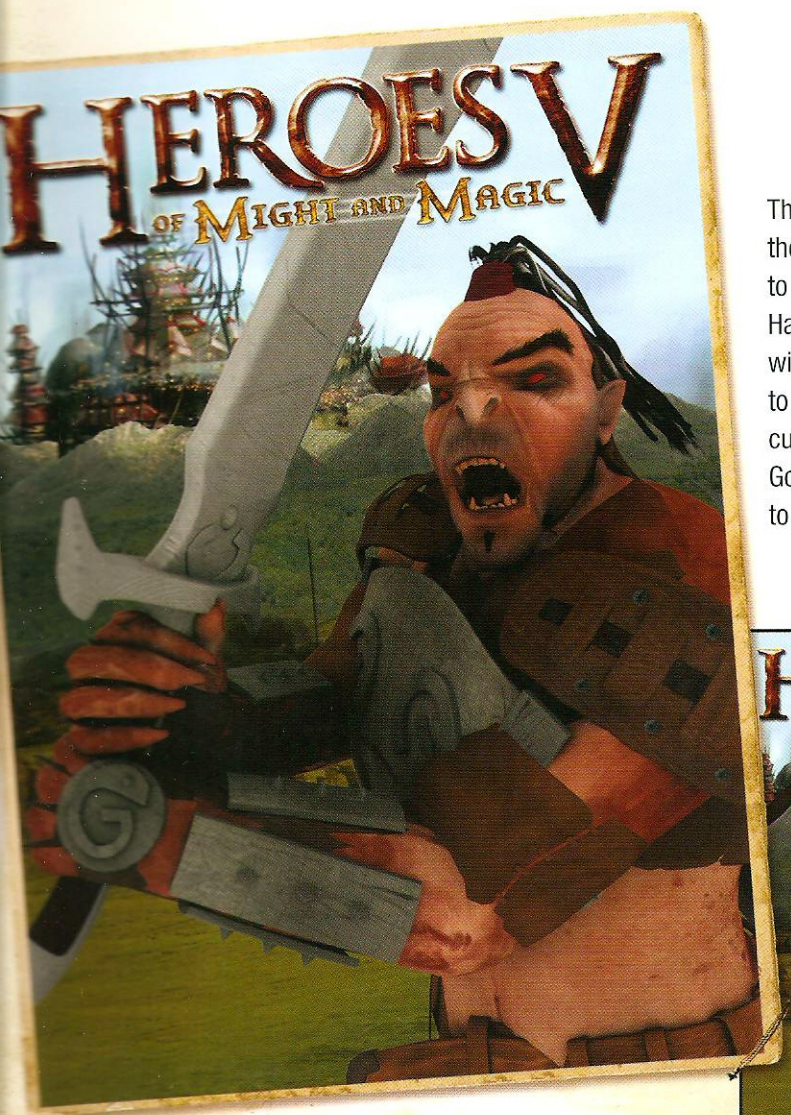
Fan Art

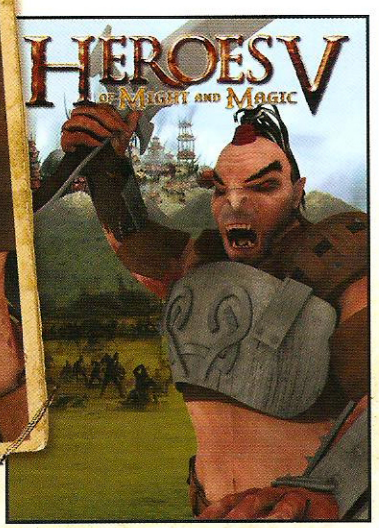
A contest was held during the later stages of development, asking fans to create artwork based on the Heroes visuals. Hundreds of entries came flying in, most of them very impressive. The best images -- which are shown here -- are of professional quality, and were used in the game itself.

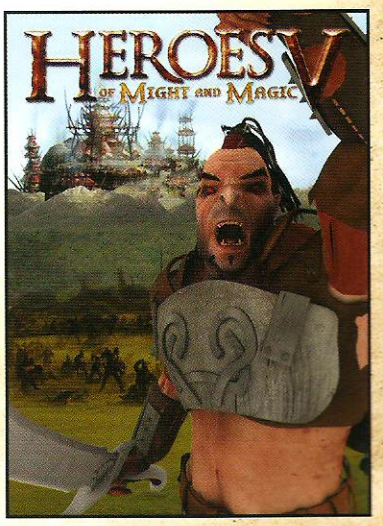



Packaging

The packaging of the second add-on, Tribes of the East, was the object of a little more head-scratching than usual, as it had to be approved by everyone. We had released Heroes 5 and Hammers of Fate already, and our goal was to stay coherent with the previous packaging style. However, we also wanted it to be more dynamic and more agressive, reflecting the Orcs' culture and philosophy. A lot of different poses for the hero, Gotai, were proposed (only a few are shown here), and we had to vote to narrow down the choice to only a few.

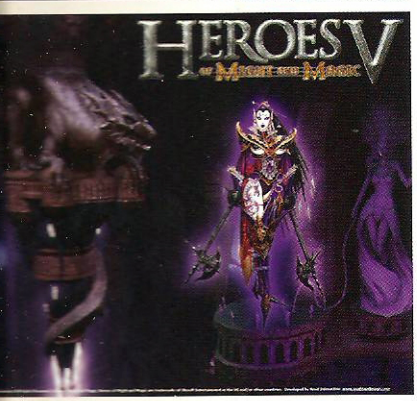


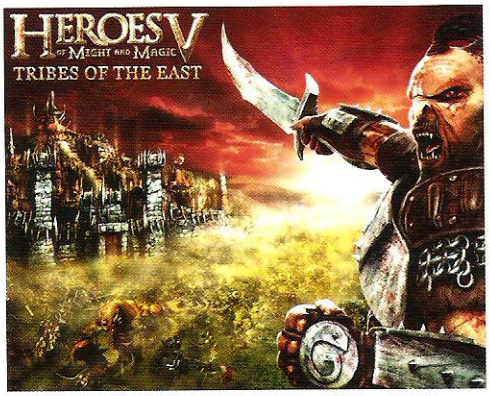




Tarot

The deck of Tarot cards includes all the major game heroes, plus details from the best of Olivier Ledroit's designs and drawings. It contains all the traditional Tarot trumps and, therefore, can be used for divination, as well. Please note that the yellow «atomic» pig in the photo is not included.





I had been thinking about getting a tattoo since I was sixteen, and was looking for a painting that I could relate to. Thanks to my interest in the game, I found the perfect one!

Noam Ripp, fan

Merchandising